

Thursday April 30 1998

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The Guardian

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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

The people's story. By Jonathan Freedland

Turning 50 with Israel

G2 with European weather

The new section that serves you right. In G2

Consumer

The hidden dangers of flying
Know your genetically modified food

OnLine

Paying the price for games on the Net

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Hounding of Mary Bell

Child killer forced to go on the run after tabloids track her down

Luke Harding

THE child killer Mary Bell was last night on the run after in effect being hounded out of the seaside home where she had lived anonymously with her 14-year-old daughter.

She was forced to flee after several tabloid newspapers tracked down her common-law husband and set up camp outside her house. Bell has now been moved to a secret address.

Probation sources last night said the fact that her whereabouts were now widely known raised the "nightmare scenario" of her being hounded, like the sex offender Sidney Cooke, from town to town.

"We are now running around making arrangements to fend off the media rather than getting on with our statutory work," one probation officer said last night.

In his first public comments on the affair, the Prime Minister yesterday said it was "inherently repugnant" and "plain wrong" that Bell should have received money for collaborating on a book about her life.

The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, said that payment by the author Gitta Sereny to Bell, for co-operation in her book *Cries Unheard*, "compromised" Bell's anonymity.

His comments added to the widespread impression that the injunction preventing her from being identified was teetering on the edge of collapse. At 6pm last night the Official Solicitor moved to shut down a loophole in the law which might have allowed newspapers in Scotland to have revealed Bell's new identity — and identify the South Coast town where she has been living. The original injunction covered only England and Wales.

Officials were anxious to avoid a repeat of the Jack Straw fiasco, when the Home Secretary was named by Scottish newspapers as the minister whose son had been caught dealing drugs.

The injunction restraining the media was taken out to protect Bell's 14-year-old daughter from harassment. The Guardian has learned that until recently she had been completely unaware of

who her mother was. The money paid to Bell has already been spent, the Guardian has learned, making it virtually impossible to recover. The Attorney General, John Morris QC, yesterday announced he was investigating how it might be retrieved.

A spokesman for his office admitted it was "not at all clear" what action he could take. Legal sources said it might be possible to win a High Court order which would force Bell to account for how the money had been spent. "It would be pretty difficult to get back," one source said.

The Prime Minister, questioned during a live "cyber grilling" from 10 Downing

'I cannot feel it is right that someone should make money out of crimes that are absolutely appalling'

Tony Blair


Street on the Internet, said Mr Straw was looking at ways to tighten the law to make sure the Bell payment was not repeated. "I cannot instinctively feel it is right that someone should make money out of crimes that are absolutely appalling," he said. "I don't think it is justifiable. I cannot justify it." He added: "If the law can be tightened sensibly, it should be."

But Ms Sereny, whose book is being serialised by the Times, defended her actions.

"The payment wasn't excessive," she said. "This money is absolutely infinitesimal in comparison with the offers she [Bell] has had from the very same newspapers who have been screaming the loudest these last 10 days."

She added: "The offers are continuing to come in." Ms Sereny dismissed claims that she gave Bell more than £50,000 — made when the Guardian broke the

GITTA SERENY



CRIES UNHEARD

THE STORY OF MARY BELL

The book which has excited controversy since it became known that the author paid Mary Bell for her co-operation

story on Saturday — but admitted Bell had received money from her. "I felt that I wanted to give her some of the money that was advanced to me for this book, because I could not use her, as everybody else has done."

Ms Sereny described Bell as a "horribly damaged child" rather than a criminal.

In her unpublished autobiography, *Life Without Life*, Bell reveals that her sexually abusive mother Betty tried to have her adopted, the Guardian has learned. She also reveals that — until her escape from prison at the age of 20, when she fled to Blackpool — she had never been on holiday, had a boyfriend, or been to a funeral.

It was unclear last night whether booksellers would respond to pressure not to stock *Cries Unheard*, which is to be published on May 6. Chris Burton, manager of the Dilworth branch in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where Bell's victims lived, yesterday said no decision had been made. June Richardson, whose four-year-old son Martin

Brown was strangled by Bell, has written to the Home Secretary, urging him to stop the payment.

The letter was also signed by Eileen Corrigan, whose son Brian Howe, three, was also killed by Bell, when she was just 11.

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Tobacco firm axed warning to mothers

Sarah Boseley
Health Correspondent

BITAIN'S biggest tobacco company made a decision in 1974 not to try to stop pregnant women from smoking, even though it knew that unborn babies could be harmed.

The revelations in internal documents belonging to British American Tobacco could open a new front in the wars against the tobacco companies now being fought by cancer survivors in Britain and in the United States. Martyn Day, of the law firm Leigh, Day and Co, who represents some of them, said it might now be possible for the children of women who smoked in pregnancy to sue for compensation.

The papers show that at a meeting in May 1974, BAT's executives considered making it worldwide policy "not to encourage smoking, (i) by children (ii) by pregnant women (iii) to excess". In a draft typed document, the second category, pregnant women, is crossed through in ink several times. In the final document, there are only two categories, and pregnant women do not feature.

The health risks that cigarettes posed to the unborn child were by that time well known in medical circles and to tobacco companies' advisers. Some babies were premature and had very low birth weight (under five pounds), which led to ill-health and possibly low intelligence, while others were born dead or died soon after birth.

As early as 1857 the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology published a paper on premature births linked to smoking. In 1972, two years before BAT's meeting, the British Medical Journal published what Ann Charlton of Manchester University describes as "the classic paper" by Neville Butler and associates.

In Cigarette Smoking in



Pregnancy: Its Influence on Birth Weight and Perinatal Mortality, Prof Butler states that at least 30 per cent of women were smoking regularly beyond the fourth month of pregnancy. If all those women could be persuaded to stop, he wrote, "this might amount to a saving of approximately 1,500 babies each year in England, Scotland and Wales".

The BAT papers are among 39,000 documents just put in as evidence in the court case being fought in the US state of Minnesota. Others show how BAT and other tobacco companies were well aware of the prevailing medical view. A memorandum dated January 1969, belonging to another big tobacco company, Philip Morris, says: "Now we have a study of the effect of smoking in pregnancy which supports previous conclusions that smoking mothers produce smaller babies. The position



Italian MP shown red card for soccer brawl in parliament



Italian MPs restrain Domenico Gramazio PHOTOGRAPH BY RA-TV

John Hooper in Rome

LET NO ONE say that Domenico Gramazio is a man lacking in the capacity for self-criticism.

The Italian far-rightwing MP yesterday became perhaps the first European legislator to be involved in a brawl in parliament over football. Gold-haired ushers of the lower house had to restrain him as he tried to storm the government benches and punch Massimo Mauro, an MP of the Democratic Left and a former Juventus player who was chanting "Clown, Clown".

With the words of the deputy prime minister — "a spectacle that is unworthy, embarrassing and grotesque" — ringing in his ears, the honourable member for the Roman constituency of Appia Latin admitted he had erred. "I ought not to have tried to beat up Massimo Mauro in parliament," he said. "I ought to have tried to beat him up outside."

They take their football seriously in Italy. With the country's membership of the euro about to be decided, and Naples in the throes of a seemingly endless gang war, the parliamentarians decided the issue most worthy of their

attention yesterday was whether the referee should have given a penalty to Inter Milan last Saturday for a foul on the team's Brazilian striker, Ronaldo. Replying to questions, the deputy prime minister, Walter Veltroni, brought to bear on the issue the full weight of a statesman's rhetorical talent. "It is in the interests of the nation," he declared, "that soccer — which is also one of the great national industries — be played in conditions of transparency, orderliness and absolute morality."

The controversy, which has figured prominently in the media throughout this

week, centres on the fact that Inter's opponents were Juventus, the team owned by the mighty Agnelli family, part-owners of the Fiat motor empire. There have long been claims that refereeing mistakes consistently favour Juventus, for reasons Mr Gramazio alluded to when he alleged that "a lot of Italian referees drive Fiats".

Even some Italians, though, felt it was an odd use of parliamentary time. "It is absurd that with all the problems we have, we are talking about soccer in parliament," said Cesare Rizzi of the separatist Northern League.

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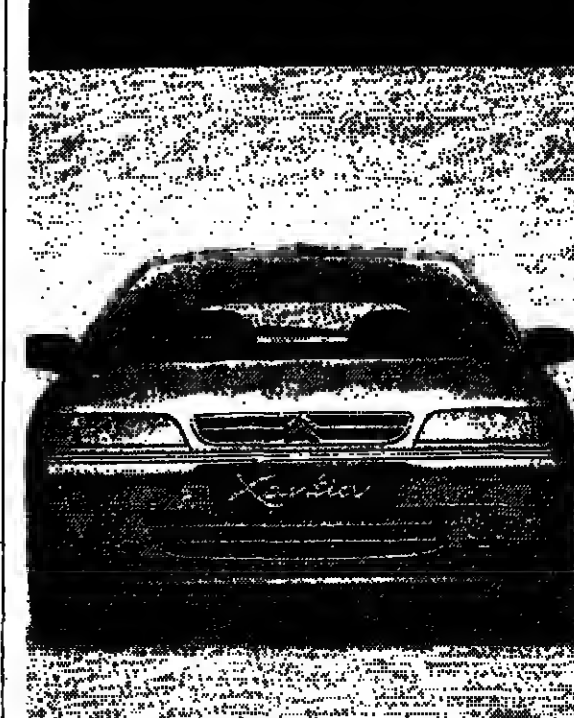
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NOTHING MOVES YOU LIKE A CITROEN

Sketch

Cheek to cheek in anniversary waltz



Simon Hoggart

TONY BLAIR (Official Prime Minister of the England World Cup Football Team) answered questions about his first year in office. The anniversary of his election falls tomorrow.

To be fair, he allowed himself only a few moments of gloating. Anne McGuire (Official Tidy to the Scottish Football Team), declared that the people of her constituency, Stirling, "had made their contribution to the victory," as if they had spent the days knitting woolly socks for election workers, and sending tins of spam to the front.

"I also comment that even in the most critical analyses of our first year, we have not heard the cry, 'Bring back the Tories!'" said Ms McGuire.

"Bring back the Tories," shouted some, "no doubt a dutiful Tory. But only one."

Mr Blair launched into a list of his triumphs, which turned out to be nine in number, including more money for the NHS, handguns banned, referendums in Scotland and Wales, and so forth.

He did not add: "The Lord Chancellor's official home refurbished; Formula One motor racing spared from the ban on tobacco advertising; The fox hunting bill quashed; Benefits for single mothers slashed."

But they would have cheered just as loudly if he had.

William Hague launched into a repetitive attack on NHS waiting lists. This was a mistake.

His point is fair. But by pursuing it at such length, he implied that waiting lists were the only thing the new admin-

istration had got wrong. A succession of New Labour creeps rose to ask their questions.

Jan Pearson asked whether Mr Blair would agree that the Government "trusted the people of Britain?" (He did agree.)

Tony Coleman of Putney wondered whether, in view of the extra money Labour had splashed out on education in Wandsworth, his message to the electors of that borough would be "Vote Labour?"

"Answer! Answer!" bawled the Tories. Over their noise, the Prime Minister was - thank goodness - able to shout his answer, which was that under Labour, the extra money for education was actually getting through to the schools. "Huzzah!" cried the messaged ranks of satraps behind him.

Then Dennis Skinner stood up. For some reason, and for some time, Mr Skinner has been obsessed by the need to keep sterling strong. His general view is that a low pound is a conspiracy by the biased, silk-batted capitalists who are still oppressing the workers. His specific view is that a devalued pound loses elections.

He began: "Is the Prime Minister aware that as I was surfing the Internet today..."

The House gasped. The idea of Skinner surfing anything more hi-tech than the back of a crisp packet astonished them. And had anyone realised that there was a Great Mining Disasters web site, or pneumoconiosis home page?

Mr Blair then announced that when he had been surfing the Net he had discovered, to his astonishment, something labelled Meet Your Heroes, which included William Hague, along with Madonna, the Spice Girls and the Wombles (Official Furry Rodents to the England Football Team).

"Who no doubt are delighted that Wimbledon now has a Labour MP."

(Up to a point. Madame Chole was a bit of a LibDem, and Great Uncle Bulgaria was definitely Old Labour.)

Review

A show boat to white comforts

Michael Billington

Show Boat
Prince Edward Theatre

WE ARE always told that Show Boat, the American musical, that it was the first to deal with adult issues such as race and miscegenation. But until this fine production by Hal Prince came along, it always struck me as one of those works that falls apart in the second act.

Prince has solved the problems inherent in Oscar Hammerstein's book, based on the Edna Ferber novel, in two ways. First, he emphasises social context so that the race issue doesn't disappear when Julie LaVerne is forced to leave Cap'n Andy's pleasure-craft because she has married a white man.

In the scenes on the Natchez levee we are constantly reminded of Southern apartheid in the 1890s not just by the barge-toting and bale-lifting but by the Coloureds Only sign in the show boat theatre balcony. As the story shifts to Chicago early in the century, Prince keeps before us the idea that white comfort depends on black toil: there's a telling moment when, as

streamers fill the stage celebrating New Year 1900, Chicago's urban blacks clear the debris just as they would have done down on the Mississippi.

Prince also bolsters the second half by treating it not just as a sequel to the first but as a panorama of American life. He gives us a kaleidoscopic montage of the years from 1900 to 1921 with characters appearing through the revolving doors of a Chicago hotel, responding to the changing fashions and dances.

Prince and his designer, Eugene Lee, are the heroes of this production, which began in Toronto five years ago. Only some of the casting disappoints. Magnolia, Cap'n Andy's daughter, never blossoms, and Gaylord Ravenal, the riverboat gambler she fatally marries, is nothing special.

The strength lies in Michael Bell's magnificent rendering, as Joe, of Ol' Man River. In Joel Blum's eccentric comedy as the show boat's vaudeville villain, and in George Grizzard's effortless timing as Cap'n Andy. Grizzard's performance holds this exuberant and time-honoured spectacle together.

This review appeared in some editions yesterday.

Veterans who fought to establish Jewish homeland 50 years ago pay tribute to fallen comrades

Israel's day of grief and joy

David Starrock
in Sha'ar HaGai

FOREIGN volunteers from 33 countries who fought in Israel's 1948 war of independence gathered here yesterday to remember their dead comrades, to stand among their inheritors and to mark the 50th anniversary of the state's founding.

Sirons brought the country to a two-minute standstill as nearly 19,000 soldiers killed to the last half-century were remembered country-wide.

The period of mourning which descended with last week's Holocaust commemoration was lifted last night as

'I suppose I got 'em going. I'm not Jewish. I could have stayed on, but I got bored and I suppose I would have had to convert. It's their country. Anyway, they've won every damn war since'

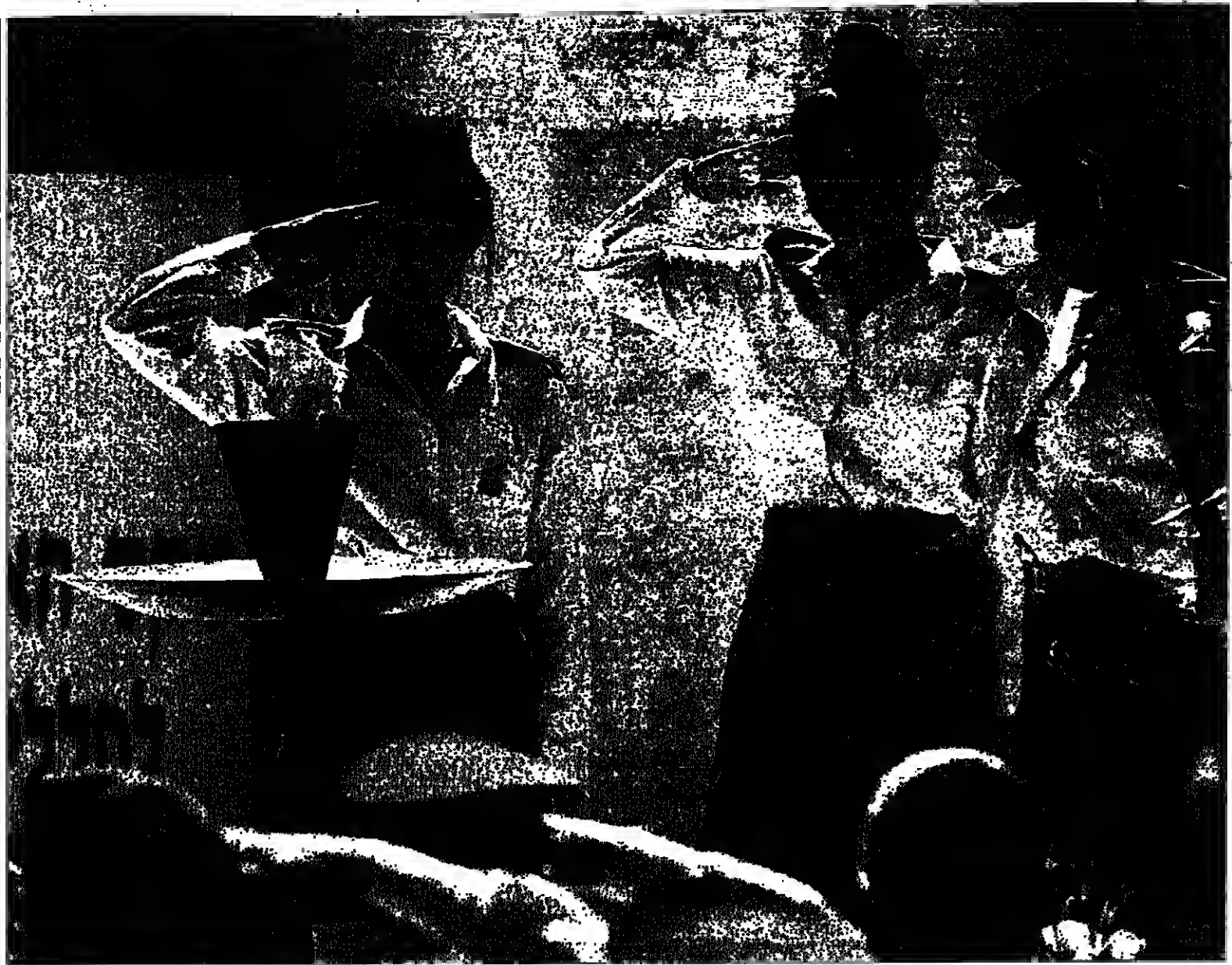
Veteran Tom Bowden,
Norfolk farmer,
aged 76

fireworks and full-throated parties burst on to the streets. It is a quintessentially Jewish way to celebrate, stark reminders of a horrific past twinned with jubilation and triumph and hope.

The mood pervaded yesterday's ceremony at Sha'ar HaGai where, guarded by the present soldierly generation - teenagers with gelled hair, tinted sunglasses and earrings - Israel's first volunteer army counted among its number the founders of the modern air force, navy and paratroop regiment.

Tom Bowden, a farmer from Norfolk, merited a special mention during the candle-lighting ceremony as a Gentle who fought to establish the Jewish homeland.

The sprightly Mr Bowden, aged 76, catching on a can of Goldstar beer, first went to British Palestine in 1937 as a trooper, aged 16, in the Scots



Israeli soldiers in Jerusalem yesterday commemorate the 18,748 soldiers killed during the state's 50-year history

PHOTOGRAPH: RICK BOWMER

Greys "to chase Arabs". There he was placed under the command of Orde Wingate, a pro-Zionist from whom he learned Special Forces skills such as night-raiding.

At the age of 18 he was fighting the Vichy French in Syria - "on horseback, with swords" - when he was injured with his guide, a sergeant in the illegal Jewish Haganah, who lost an eye. The sergeant was Moshe Dayan, later to become Israel's defence minister.

Already sympathetic to the Zionist dream, it was Mr Bowden's second world war experiences which confirmed him. Captured at Arrhen, the Germans found letters on him

from a Jewish girlfriend in Palestine. "The German major said to me, 'I'll show you what we do to the Jews - you're going to Belsen.'"

Typhus was raging through the camp, where he worked loading corpses. "It was a filthy, degrading experience. The attitude of the Germans was something else. It wasn't just a handful of SS, it was the whole goddamn nation. They treated the Jews as less than animals. They thought they were less than lice."

After liberation day, Mr Bowden went to work for Marshall Tito in Yugoslavia as a parachute instructor. "But the Israeli thing was starting up and I thought to myself, I'd

better get there - we don't want another Belsen."

He entered Palestine through Cyprus and joined the Haganah under a pseudonym. Captain David Appel. At Latrun he fought alongside Holocaust survivors to keep open the vital supply route from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, close to where yesterday's commemoration took place.

"We were up against the British army-trained Trans-Jordan Frontier Force and had no water or supplies. I was in command of a lot of Polish chaps who only spoke Yiddish, so I had to learn a few words to order them to fire at the enemy," he said.

"The Poles had come

straight off the ships at Haifa from the camps, still dressed in their heavy European clothes. They thought they were going to the kibbutz. Most had never even handled a rifle before."

After the accidental shooting of David "Mickey" Marcus - tipped to be a future chief-of-staff but mistaken for an Arab when he emerged from his field tent wrapped in a white sheet and did not realise he was being asked in Hebrew for a password - the English-speaking 7th Brigade was formed, according to Mr Bowden.

"We went up to the Galilee and cleared all Arab villages up to the Lebanon border, as

far as Meiroun," he said. When the truce was declared, Mr Bowden was asked to form Israel's parachute training school at Tel Nof.

"It's still there. We had a few Dakotas and Ezer Weizmann [the present Israeli president] was there." A whole generation of Israeli leaders have since passed through the school.

"I suppose I got 'em going. I'm not Jewish. I could have stayed on but I got bored and I suppose I would have had to convert. It's their country. Anyway, they've won every damn war since then!"

Torah's guardians, page 7;
The people's story, G2 front

'One in three chance' of recession

Forecast by think-tank deepens
air of gloom amid industrialistsMark Atkinson
and David Gove

THE gloom descending on the British economy deepened yesterday when one of the country's leading think-tanks said there was a one in three chance of a recession this year and engineering industry leaders warned of mass job losses.

Narrowing the risk of a fall in output from its 25 per cent forecast made three months ago, the National Institute for Economic and Social Research said growth would be very slow this year as exports were squeezed by the strength of the pound and domestic demand weakened in response to last year's interest rate rises.

"A recession this year is

therefore well within the bounds of possibility," it said. The National Institute's downbeat forecast plays on the private fears of the Government, which is laying contingency plans for a recession, including considering giving small businesses a VAT holiday to forestall mass closures and expanding education and training to prevent swelling dole queues wrecking the New Deal.

It was echoed by the Engineering Employers' Federation, which predicted that 200,000 jobs would be lost among its members over the next two or three years as a result of the strong pound.

In its latest economic review, the EEF said that engineering redundancies would be slight this year despite a sharp fall in output

growth but employment would fall by 6 per cent next year and by even more in 2000. The industry now employs some 1.7 million.

Neil Blake, an economist with Business Strategies, who helped to draw up the report, said: "We are expecting considerable employment falls, increasing redundancies and cutbacks. We could see these being on the scale of the drops we saw in the recession of the early 1990s."

Writing in the National Institute's quarterly economic review, Rebecca Riley and Harry Young said manufacturing would bear the brunt of the slowdown which was already under way. They forecast the sector's output would probably rise by less than 0.5 per cent in 1998, "with very clear risks" that it might fall.

Although manufacturing accounted for only a fifth of the economy, the rot would spread to other sectors as factories cut employment, reined

in investment, and reduced their demand for services. Nevertheless, the National Institute expects the relative buoyancy of domestic demand for services to keep the economy ticking over. Its best guess is that, overall, the economy will expand by just under 2 per cent this year, and by 1.6 per cent in 1999.

But this is based on the assumption that the pound will decline from its current highs towards a more sustainable rate of 2.60 German marks. The EEF director general, Graham Mackenzie, said firms should not bank on the pound falling. They should plan ahead on the basis that sterling will remain at or near DM3 for the next three years because of the uncertainty surrounding the euro and the pound's continuing role as a safe haven.

Tobacco firm decided not to warn pregnant women

continued from page 1
of the medical people is that smaller babies suffer detrimental effects all through life."

Mr Day, who has 53 plaintiffs about to begin a court action in the UK, said of the BAT documents: "It is utterly depressing that a multinational company like BAT has taken such a cynical approach."

The documents raise a new issue, he said. He has details of about 500 more smoking cases, and says he will reopen his files.

Clive Bates, director of ASH (Action on Smoking and Health), says he hopes the issue will be raised at BAT's annual meeting on Friday.

"Perhaps the decision to scrub the pregnant women from the document was based on legal concerns. The moment they acknowledged that there was something to dis-

continue from page 1
harmful about pregnant women smoking."

Mr Bates believes tobacco companies were keen not to have warnings about damage to unborn babies on the pack - which did not appear until 1986, the year that the Health Education Authority launched its anti-smoking campaign.

Chris Proctor, the current head of science and regulation at BAT, said he was surprised by the documents and did not know their context.

"Why the pregnant women are crossed out I have no idea," he said. "It certainly looks odd. There's been a pretty consistent view in the company that we should not be out there trying to undermine the public health authorities on smoking and health."

"It has always been policy to advise women who are pregnant to go to a doctor and the doctor would advise them not to smoke."

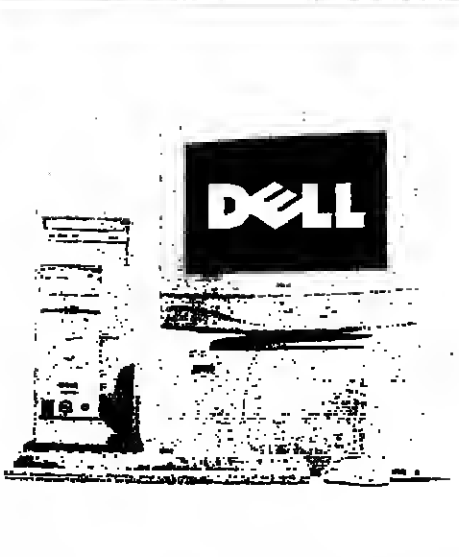
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DELL

Sport scandal



Wendie de Bruijn, who is accused of... (text is partially obscured)

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was... (text is partially obscured)

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سكرا من الامل

Sport scandal



Michelle de Bruin, who vowed to clear her name after failing a drugs test in January

PHOTOGRAPH: MATT KAVANAGH

Top swimmer denies fresh drugs claims

John Duncan and Duncan Mackay on Olympic champion's fighting talk

MICHELLE De Bruin, who as Michelle Smith came from nowhere to win three swimming gold medals for Ireland in the 1996 Olympics and was immediately the subject of a whispering campaign about drug use, said yesterday she would fight to the last to show that a recent drugs test failure was not the proof of misbehaviour that her detractors have always sought.

De Bruin's doping failure, after an out-of-competition test last January, was last night confirmed by Fina, swimming's world governing body.

"Unequivocal signs of adulteration were found and the result of the analysis was also compatible with physical manipulation," a statement from the Fina headquarters in Lausanne said.

"Fina, in accordance with the doping rules, has notified Mrs Michelle de Bruin and the Irish Amateur Swimming Federation of the results of the analysis of the A sample."

All drugs samples are divided in two. If the A sample fails a test then the B sample is opened with representatives of the athlete present. Only if the A and B samples produce the same result can the matter be brought before disciplinary bodies. The second test will be completed by May 18.

"I am innocent of these charges," De Bruin said last night at a Dublin press conference televised live across Ireland.

"I am appalled at the way they have been leaked into the public domain and I intend fully defending them. I have no intention of taking this lying down and I have no intention of being bullied by any organisation or any media interests."

"I hope that my good name and reputation and the good name and reputation of Ireland will be intact at the end of this."

De Bruin is in effect being accused of tampering with her own sample to hide drug abuse. The laboratory report faxed to her by Fina, she said,

mentioned the discovery of some metabolic precursor of testosterone.

There are also bizarre reports that the sample smelled of whiskey and it is alleged that whiskey was added to the urine sample to change its balance. De Bruin would say only that she had needed to drink a large quantity of water before giving her sample.

"Firstly, I am accused of

'I am innocent of these charges... and I intend fully defending them'

having taken advantage of a banned procedure," she said. "Secondly, I am accused of using a banned substance. Thirdly, I am accused of using a substance and a method which altered the integrity and validity of the urine sample used in doping control."

De Bruin has been the victim of persistent sniping about the rapid rise she made in the sport at a late age since 1993 when she met her husband-to-be, a Dutch discus thrower who was once banned for four years for a drugs offence.

She was not ranked among the top 25 female swimmers in the world at any distance in any stroke in 1993; by 1995 she was second in two events and 10th and 13th in two others; and in 1996 she won three Olympic races. Rivals said that such a progression was unheard of for a swimmer in her 20s.

De Bruin argues that her natural ability was held back by the lack of facilities and the lack of a proper training regime in Ireland.

De Bruin has not helped to cool the criticism by failing to inform the governing body when she was training abroad, and she faced threatened bans when drug testers turned up to her house to be told she was in the United States.

Top athletes routinely have to inform governing bodies of their movements to allow surprise testing at any time.

Her husband has also been implicated in the past by Fina for failing accreditation to allow him to be present in the sensitive doping control area when his wife was being tested.

Races that ended in gold – but no bonanza

John Duncan

MICHELLE de Bruin ought to have made herself an instant millionaire when she touched the wall ahead of the field for the third time in Atlanta. But she has not. And regardless of the outcome of the latest doping scandal to engulf her, she now knows she never will.

Whether she is guilty or innocent is not the point any more – the only question is whether the innuendo surrounding her might damage a product with which she is associated. That fear, and the doggedness of the notion that there is no smoke without fire, would make her a brave choice as a figurehead for the companies that make sports people rich.

De Bruin lives comfortably enough. She and her husband have a house and a few acres in Kilkenny, her birthplace. They have enough funds to live and train in the Netherlands, where De Bruin was born. But her list of endorers is minor league stuff. Her highest deal in the past few years

was signed before she won her medals in Atlanta, a £100,000 10-month contract to promote the Australian confectionery company TNT. It was not renewed.

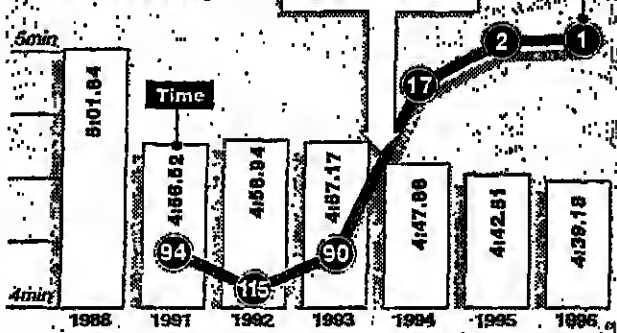
She appears on television to back the Irish language campaigners, Bord na Gaeilge, and is helped by the Irish government. De Bruin hinted last year that she had been offered a multi-million dollar deal for the movie rights to her story. But though she says she rejected it because it would have interfered with her privacy, others say the offer was much smaller.

She got into a public relations mess when she allegedly asked for £20,000 to open a leisure centre, but the council involved still looked elsewhere when she dropped her price to £9,500.

Compare that with the woman who set the whispering campaign against her going, the local hero she beat in Atlanta, Janet Evans. The American now has a \$250,000 a-year contract with Nike, a \$100,000 deal to promote shampoo, \$100,000 from ABC television for summarising

Troubled waters

Time progression in the 400m individual medley



and charges \$15,000 a time for "motivational speaking".

Or Amy van Dyken, who won four golds at Atlanta and who contributed to the wave of innuendo. Van Dyken had million-dollar contracts with Speedo and milk manufacturers signed before her towels from Atlanta had come off the radiator.

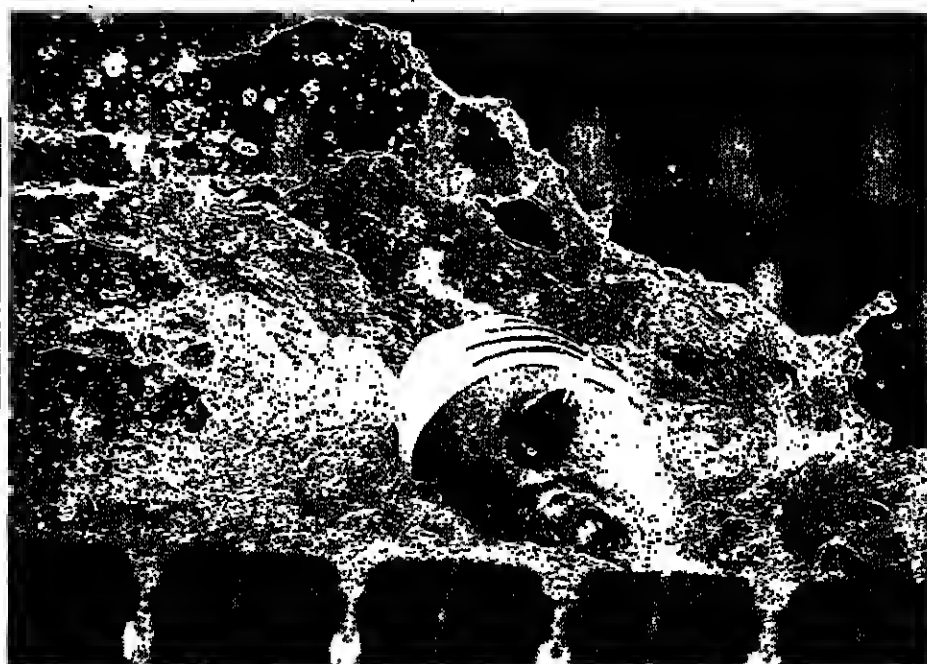
It is not as if Ireland does not worship its heroes. You

do not even have to be Irish to be lauded for bringing sporting success to the country. Jack Charlton got lucrative deals to appear in Guinness adverts, he did Shredded Wheat and a plethora of billboard stuff. And he made a lot of money.

Sonia O'Sullivan, the runner expected to be Ireland's only hope of a medal in Atlanta, was a disappointment

at the 1996 games, limping out injured. But she still managed a £250,000-a-year Nike deal, a £75,000 Heinz contract and a bank endorsement that took her earnings last year to £300,000, according to some sources. Add to that the £15,000 a race she receives just for turning up and the loser in Atlanta is laughing all the way to the Bank of Ireland.

The problem with De Bruin is that while people argue about whether it is possible to improve performance as dramatically as she did without resorting to drugs, or whether there is a vendetta against her, no one appears to care about her, either as a person or a personality. A book called *Gold*, written in association with Cathal Dervan last year, reportedly sold 5,000 copies. The latest chapter will not make pleasant reading for her bank manager.



Michelle Smith's controversial success at Atlanta two years ago has not brought the big endorsement deals less successful swimmers have won

PHOTOGRAPH: AL BELLO/ALLSPORT

Two held over Mardi Gra bombs

Janie Wilson

TWO men, believed to be brothers in their 60s, were last night being questioned by police after being arrested in connection with the Mardi Gra bombings aimed at branches of Barclays Bank and Sainsbury's supermarkets.

The arrests followed one of the largest police surveillance operations carried out in London.

A spokesperson for Scotland Yard said the men were arrested on Tuesday night in connection with allegations of demanding money with threats, explosive offences, and using firearms with intent to endanger life. A number of

properties, including a house in Chiswick, west London, were searched.

A third man, thought to be in his thirties, was also arrested but later released without charge.

Deputy Assistant Commissioner John Grieve, head of the Metropolitan Police Anti-Terrorist Branch, said yesterday: "The arrests are the result of a massive surveillance operation led by the Metropolitan Police service and supported by the National Crime Squad."

Since the bombing campaign began in 1994, 35 homemade devices have been targeted mainly at branches of Barclays Bank and Sainsbury's supermarkets.

The first bombs were sent

in video boxes which contained the words "Welcome to the Mardi Gra Experience". Subsequent devices, built from shotgun cartridges, rifle bullets, springs, metal tubes and timers, have been signed "Mardi Gra" in letters to targets.

No one has been seriously hurt by the explosions but police have become increasingly concerned at the possibility of injuries.

It has always been believed that the bombings were the work of a lone fanatic, possibly a former policeman, because of the bomber's ability to avoid detection. It is not thought either of the men being held is a serving or former police officer.

Criminal psychologists

have described the campaign as unusual because of the vagueness of the extortion demands. More than £10 million was demanded from Barclays and £500,000 from Sainsbury's. However, on both occasions no details were given about how payments were to be organised and all attempts by police to make contact were ignored.

A 67-year-old man was arrested earlier this month after police found a handgun in his car and a suspect package near a store in Ruislip, west London. The package proved to be harmless and the man was ruled out as a suspect.

The cost of the police investigation is estimated to be more than £1 million.

Grins wiped off smiley badges as dance culture faces the crunch

Dan Glatzer Arts Correspondent

ADECADE after it all started with the second Summer of Love and a proliferation of smiley badges, the party is finally coming to an end for dance culture.

Universe 98, the UK's first all-weekend outdoor dance event, one of the inheritors of the legendary Tribal Gathering events, has been cancelled in the face of poor sales and a legal battle with a rival. The event, scheduled for the last weekend in May, may now be restaged in August.

Organisers, who admit that ticket sales for Universe 98 have been "sluggish" but claim to have sold around 15,000, blame poor weather and confusion among dance fans over the two rival festivals. Music industry sources, however, claim that at the end of last week only 4,000 tickets had been sold for the 60,000 capacity event, which was to have been held at Knebworth.

Crematfields, the other festival, takes place this Saturday at the Bowl, near Winchester. Crematfields is run by the Liverpool nightclub Creme, in association with the Mean Fiddler

group. Although it is set to go ahead, ticket sales are understood to be poor, with organisers claiming sales of just below 30,000 yesterday for an event with a capacity of 40,000.

The clash between the events grew out of a dispute over rights to the name Tribal Gathering. Universe and the Mean Fiddler went into partnership three years ago to promote Tribal Gathering, the underground raves that went on in the 1990s and became one of the biggest events of last summer.

Universe ended its association with the Mean Fiddler last year, citing dis-

gruntlement among fans that the event had become too commercial. But the Mean Fiddler argued that there was an agreement for a further three years, and, alleging that Universe had broken their contract, claimed the rights to the name Tribal Gathering. Universe retaliated, saying the name belonged to them, and a court case was born.

With the dispute stuck in the courts, both sides agreed to stage dance festivals using different names. But the events were programmed against each other – and with similar line-ups. Both have suffered as a result.

You can already see the movie: a padded Ian Richardson as the evil Lord Jenkins of Hillhead; Judi Dench as the plucky Betty Boothroyd who has 24 hours to save Britain from dictatorship.
Mark Lawson — Second Thoughts

G2 page 5

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Plea for understanding over child murderer

Author defends cash for Bell

Luke Harding on a writer's attempt to find good in a killer denounced as evil

GITTA Sereny yesterday said she did not believe Mary Bell was a criminal, but rather that she was a "horribly damaged child".

In a series of unrepentant media interviews, she said she had written her book *Cries Unheard* "because we need to understand why a child kills".

Ms Sereny also defended her decision to pay for collaboration. "I felt that I wanted to give her some of the money that was advanced to me for this book because I could not use her, as everybody else has done," she said.

"She is a very chaotic personality but she is, if you want me to put it this way, she is good and she wants to do good," Ms Sereny said.

The aim of the book was to change the system so that children were never again tried in adult courts, or sent to adult prisons, she explained. "Breaking points exist and we have to learn how they come about, and that is what we are learning through Mary, with Mary's help, because she is very intelligent and she has really devoted herself to helping to establish this," Ms Sereny said.

"Mary committed the two worst crimes which could be committed, and yet you see she was not a criminal, she was a horribly damaged

child. Even today she is a very damaged child — but of course without any violence in her."

"The violence has gone because, thank God if I may say so, her mother is dead," Bell's crimes were a cry for help, after she herself had been mistreated grossly, she said.

"Mary Bell... killed these two children. It was a terrible act. She was treated up to that time by her mother in such a way that some explosion had to happen."

"She did not understand what she was doing and all this comes out in the book very clearly," Ms Sereny said.

She described Cries Unheard as "not sensationalist". She added: "I am trying to find out why a child would kill two little children whom she hardly knew."

Ms Sereny said she was "interested" in the Prime Minister's views — after he condemned the payment to Bell. But she said she would be "more interested" in them if he had read the book first.

"We still don't understand why children kill children," she said.

Ms Sereny's book is not published until Wednesday. Macmillan, the publishers, yesterday refused to be drawn into the row, as bookshops in Newcastle — where Bell's crimes took place — expressed doubts about whether they would stock the book.



June Richardson with a picture of her murdered son, Martin. PHOTOGRAPH OWEN HUMPHREYS

'We're trying to get people to realise our feelings have been forgotten about'

The mother

Peter Hetherington

SHE HAS rarely called for retribution. "As far as I was concerned Mary Bell died when she came out of prison... a new girl," she says wearily. "And then when I heard she had a child... well everyone else's child is very precious to me. I don't want that child to suffer through what's happened. I didn't want any of this."

Until recently time was proving something of a healer for June Richardson, whose four-year-old son, Martin, was Mary Bell's first victim. Life appeared to be returning to normality in the family home in Gateshead. "It was getting much better, good. I mean, I still had this in the back of my mind, but I was thinking more about Martin than I was about what happened to him and I was actually losing the hate of Mary Bell until this and now it's all just come back again."

With two daughters, aged 25 and 31, June Richardson has been careful to gloss over the events of May 1983 for the sake of her 13-year-old grandson. "Since he was born I was coming to terms with it because I said I would never in-

still hate in my grandson. He didn't know he had an uncle until a fortnight ago."

This weekend, she will go to the centre of Newcastle-upon-Tyne with Eileen Corrigan, whose three-year-old son was Bell's second victim, to stage a quiet demonstration beside the city's two largest bookshops. They will carry petition forms with the message — "don't sell the book, don't buy the book".

"We started off by asking people to come, to tell the world that this is wrong, and it has sort of escalated and a lot more people are wanting to come along including other women who've lost children. We're just trying to get people to realise that our feelings have been forgotten about."

June Richardson tries not to be bitter. "But nothing ever happened to help the victims. We didn't hear from anyone for 30 years... It was all about trying to understand Mary Bell. They never came to see how the victims were managing."

Her marriage to Martin's father broke down about six years after the murder. "I am still in touch with Martin's dad. What must this be doing to him? What you've got to remember is he really lost three children, not one. But when you have a big thing like that... things just don't work out."

June Richardson insists she would not object to an academic work about the life and times of Mary Bell. "If this book is solely for the purpose of getting people to understand why young children kill... it should have been for the psychologists and for students studying crime, but not to be publicised so that 10-year-olds in the street can get hold of it. She [Gitta Sereny] should have had the knowledge to come to me long before this ever happened and explained it to me."

This week, she received a letter from Sereny, in which the writer insisted Bell deserved to be compensated for her "grindingly agonising" co-operation with preparation of the book. "It was an insult to my intelligence. She had all the time in the world to do this. The last time she wrote a book I was promised I would get to read it before publication. I went into town one Saturday and posters of Mary Bell were everywhere. That took me a year to get over and now she's done it again. She... can't feel sorry for me or sorry for the victim's families."

June Richardson says she has a simple wish. "All I want to do is to get back to the life I had a fortnight ago and make people realise that we are human beings and we deserve some rights."

'I could not use her. I had to give her part of the money'

The writer

Extracts from the letter from Gitta Sereny to June Richardson, delivered on Tuesday

CANNOT tell you, or Mrs Howa and her family, how desperately sorry I am that the news of my book has reached you in this appalling way. We had undertaken, for good and valid reasons, to keep the subject of the book under wraps for as long as possible, and we managed to do so for over two years and

would have continued to do so... if a disgruntled man had not broken his undertaking of silence and told the Observer that Mary Bell was the subject of the book.

I have hated to see you so pale, so worn out with it all now. I'm so sorry. But then again I was touched to be told that you had corrected yourself on the TODAY programme (sic) this morning, and that you said that, no, you didn't mind the BOOK... that what hurt you so much was that Mary Bell had received money.

The awful thing, June, is

that only by reading the book could you understand why I have given her some money, and yet I neither expect you, or even particularly wish for you to read the book: I can imagine it would be too much for you... With this I'm only telling you that Martin and Brian were never out of my mind, and nor were you and Brian's family.

But the purpose of the book was not to relive these terrible crimes, but to find some understanding of how they could happen. I knew twenty-nine years ago... after speaking for

such a long time with Mary Bell's family, that there were things in the childhood of that small girl no one knew about, and there had to be a REASON for the awful pain she caused.

But why money?... I could not have accepted for Mary Bell to do what she did during those six months, a grindingly agonising effort for her, without giving her a part of what I was given.

If I hadn't done so, I would have made myself guilty of doing what was done to her virtually since she was born: to USE her.



Gitta Sereny... letter says she is desperately sorry for hurt

'Whingeing' care staff criticised

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

SOCIAL workers in some areas are failing to ensure that children in their care are safe from abuse, and see themselves as victims when criticised, the chief inspector of social services has said in an outspoken dressing-down of the directors responsible.

Random inspections had found that safeguards were "at best patchy and in some places wholly unacceptable".

Sir Herbert Laming told social services directors at a private conference.

The chief inspector said social workers should stop whingeing. Too often, they "see themselves as victims when criticised rather than presenting reasoned explanations for their actions".

The comments came in Sir Herbert's last address to the Association of Directors of Social Services. He is to retire in July.

His uncharacteristically terse remarks will be seen as an exasperation that some councils are taking so long to put their houses in order despite a wave of abuse scandals, a copy of which has been sent by the Guardian, Sir Herbert said.

Social services had risen well to the challenges presented by stewardship of the £9 billion social care budget. However, "only some" departments had adequate management and "adequate management and too many were isolated and insular. There was now convincing evidence that poor services did not necessarily stem from lack of funding."

Reports of joint inspections of departments by the Social Services Inspectorate and the Audit Commission showed there was "no clear evidence of a direct relationship between quality, finance and meeting local need".

Separate SSI inspections of a sample of departments, checking safeguards for children in care, had just been completed. Even though councils had been told a year ago to give the issue priority, "I still find it incredible that sometimes inspectors have difficulty in getting from some authorities information



'Social workers see themselves as victims when criticised'

—Sir Herbert Laming

about the number of children who are looked after, or their child protection register.

"Or there is uncertainty about how many of these children have been allocated a social worker. Too often statutory duties have been disregarded."

Social services departments had to do more to improve their public image. In many cases, they should start by reviewing reception and waiting areas.

Social workers also needed to "avoid lofty claims about our work, as if to imply others cannot understand the issues or the processes," said Sir Herbert, who was social services director of Hertfordshire from 1978 to 1981.

● Ten per cent of social workers regularly give money from their own pockets to impoverished clients, says a survey of 1,000 professionals by Reed Business Research for Community Care magazine published today.

Support for the Labour Party has dropped among social workers since 1984, the survey suggests. Fifty-nine per cent would vote Labour now compared to 73 per cent in 1994.

Aslef attacks HSE report for blaming driver □ Railtrack criticised for not moving signal

Rail crash inquiry attacked as 'whitewash'

Keith Harper, Transport Editor

THE inquiry into the Watford train crash, which killed one passenger and injured more than 70, was last night accused of a whitewash after it laid most of the blame on the driver, who was acquitted of manslaughter last month.

The Health and Safety Executive investigation also criticised Railtrack for failing to reposition a speed restriction sign on the main line between Buxton and Scotland which could have averted the collision with an empty train.

The report says that this, together with better brakes and the provision of an automatic train protection system, which prevents drivers going through signals at danger, could all have prevented the accident in August 1995.

The HSE said the primary cause of the accident was driver Peter Afford passing a red signal after going through two cautionary signals.

Lew Adams, leader of the train drivers' union Aslef, said: "We can have no confidence in the railway inspectorate when its report whitewashes those really responsible for this accident. The driver is left to carry the can. Our member was acquitted — now he is tried for a second time and found guilty."

"This is the individual blame culture. We all know that failings in the signalling

and track lay-out caused this accident. Yet the HSE pussyfoots and says there is insufficient evidence to prosecute the management."

The HSE says that Railtrack failed to set up proper investigation procedures after four previous incidents of trains passing signals at danger at the accident spot. The inappropriate position of the speed restriction sign had given confusing information.

The problem had been identified almost four years before, but Railtrack had taken no action.

The report says the evidence is not strong enough to justify legal proceedings against Railtrack or the train operating company. But it expresses concern at the length of time being taken to upgrade the braking on the type of train involved.

In one of its 21 recommendations, the HSE says it has asked Railtrack to look again at an automatic protection system which would immediately halt a train once it had passed a red signal.

Railtrack has dismissed the £1 billion plan, although it will gradually be brought in on the east and west coast main lines.

Railtrack will give its answer in several months, but will almost certainly reject the idea. Instead, it will tell the HSE it will improve safety protection at key junctions. It said it would study the report's recommendations.



A carriage lies on an embankment outside Watford after the collision in which a woman died. PHOTOGRAPH MICHAEL STEPHENS

IRA urged to show secret graves

John Mulloy, Ireland Correspondent

MO MOWLAM, the Northern Ireland Secretary, is likely to bring forward publication of a government report on the victims of the troubles to put pressure on the paramilitaries before the May 22 referendum on the Good Friday agreement.

The report, which goes further than originally envisaged, is understood to call on the IRA to identify the graves of up to 20 people it is believed to have secretly killed, and buried close to the Irish border or in the hills overlooking Belfast. Most were suspected informers.

The report considers setting up a Victims Forum to

bring together groups involved in rehabilitation, and better compensation schemes.

Families of the Disappeared, set up four years ago, said it wanted the IRA to identify the graves of those it murdered to allow proper burial. It believed that an amnesty for terrorist prisoners should be linked to the IRA according to its request.

One of its founders is Helen McKendry, whose mother, Jean McConville, was abducted from home just before Christmas 1972. She was a widow with 10 children.

Mrs McConville, aged 37, a Protestant, had married a Catholic corporal in the British army, and taken his religion.

Some of the so-called disap-

peared were informers. Several are thought to be cases of mistaken identity.

The best known victim was Captain Robert Nairac, an undercover SAS officer abducted from a pub in south Armagh in 1977.

● The European Union promised another £70 million for the Northern Ireland peace process next year, as Ms Mowlam appealed to Brussels to keep the money flowing, writes Martin Walker in Brussels.

"I cannot stress enough how much there is still to be done," she told the parliament in an emotional session yesterday. The EU has already provided £1.3 billion to Northern Ireland over the past five years.

French truckers threaten World Cup chaos over pay

CFDT union caused long tailbacks on main roads, halted cross-Channel ferry traffic and blocked the Channel tunnel as protesting truckers threw up 170 barricades.

Petrol stations received no fuel, shops ran out of food and major factories closed down for lack of parts.

Some 2.5 million French and foreign World Cup ticket-holders will be travelling between the tournament's 10 venues in June and July.

"I hope this gets sorted out very soon indeed," said a spokesman for the French World Cup organising committee, which is already under fire for the chaotic telephone hotline operation it mounted to sell 170,000 remaining tickets.

FRANCE'S militant truckers' unions, whose strikes have brought the country to a standstill twice in the past two years, yesterday threatened to cause chaos during this summer's World Cup if their pay demands are not met soon.

"A strike is the only way to make employers listen," said Roger Poletti, of the Force Ouvrière union.

"Drivers will be meeting on May 16 and will decide then what steps to take. But I cannot rule out action that could affect the World Cup."

A six-day strike last November by some 340,000 members of FO and the larger

CFDT union caused long tailbacks on main roads, halted cross-Channel ferry traffic and blocked the Channel tunnel as protesting truckers threw up 170 barricades.

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Tycoon expands to fill CIS office

James Meek in Moscow

IT WAS the perfect gift for a billionaire in a hurry: a job with ill-defined powers, no responsibility, an imposing title and unlimited back-door access to the rich and powerful.

It was the perfect next move in the seemingly unstoppable march of the ubiquitous, controversial Russian tycoon Boris Yeltsin, who was yesterday appointed secretary of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) by a vote of 12 presidents.

Among them was Boris Yeltsin, key members of whose inner circle — "the Family" — are close to Mr Yeltsin.

He claimed that the initiative to appoint the businessman had come from the president of one of the other former Soviet states, but he knew his comment would provoke a storm from the polarised media and a wider public always looking for a new Rasputin at the heart of power.

"I agreed because Berezovsky is a lively man," he said. "I think many will explode [over this appointment] tomorrow. But you'll have to swallow it — it's for the sake of business."

He sacked Mr Berezovsky from his last state post as deputy secretary of the Russian security council because of a conflict of interest with his private business activity. With the CIS post, there are no such rules.

"I did once sack him, but that doesn't bother me," said Mr Yeltsin.

Mr Berezovsky's predecessor at the CIS secretariat in Minsk, Belarus, was Ivan Korotchenya, a nonentity at the helm of an organisation without funds or purpose which is little more than the ghost of an idea of co-operation between ex-Soviet states.

Mr Berezovsky, whose personal aim in life is "expansion", has an opportunity to revitalise the organisation. The question is whether he will be working for the CIS or to his own agenda.

The lack of power attached to the post is unlikely to trouble Mr Berezovsky, who typically exercises control and influence with a minimum of formal involvement.



He has a minority shareholding in the CIS-wide television channel ORT, but controls the slant of its news. His weight in the oil giant Yukos is out of proportion to his financial stake in it. He has no

'Berezovsky is a lively man. I think many will explode tomorrow. But you'll have to swallow it for the sake of business'

Boris Yeltsin

status in the Kremlin beyond being "unofficial adviser" to the head of the president's administration, Valentin Yumashev, but has real pull because of his friendships with Mr Yumashev and the presi-

dent's daughter, Tatyana Dyachenko.

The activities of the 52-year-old businessman, formerly known as a brilliant mathematician, have become entwined with Russian business, media and politics that it is easier to define politicians as pro- or anti-Berezovsky than by their stance on issues.

The mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov, and Alexander Lebed, two populist anti-Communist patriots who want to be Russia's next president, offered opposing views on Mr Berezovsky's appointment yesterday.

"Whatever position he takes, I do not believe that Berezovsky can do anything useful for Russia," said Mr Luzhkov.

General Lebed, who has benefited from Mr Berezovsky's financial backing in his campaign for an important governorship in Siberia, said: "Taking into account the energy and enthusiasm of Berezovsky, there is every reason to expect that integration processes in the CIS will be moved off square one."

His new appointment is likely to irritate the new government of Sergei Kiriyenko, and seems to represent a classic example of Mr Yeltsin playing allies off against each other.

Mr Berezovsky has encountered setbacks: he was seriously injured by a car bomb in an assassination attempt in 1994, questioned by police about the murder of ORT's director, Vlad Lishev, in 1995

(no action was taken), and last year defeated with his partners in an attempt to gain a stake in Russia's huge Svyazinvest telecoms concern.

The latter sparked a bitter feud between Mr Berezovsky and the then deputy prime minister, Anatoly Chubais, which is to be resumed with the auction of the huge state oil company Rosneft.

Both BP and Shell are involved in bids for Rosneft. Mr Berezovsky's Yukos has teamed up with Elf-Aquitaine of France.

The auction is likely to set Mr Berezovsky in opposition to the deputy prime minister, Boris Nemtsov, who announced on his Website yesterday that he would be in charge of energy issues in the new government.

Albania calls for Nato troops on Serb border

John Hooper in Rome and agencies in Trans

ALBANIA urged the Contact Group of major powers yesterday to send Nato troops to Albania to stop the conflict in neighbouring Serbia's Kosovo region from spilling over.

"The situation [on the border with Kosovo] ... leads us to think that the presence of Nato in Albania is greatly needed as a factor of pressure and security against the conflict," the Albanian prime minister, Fatos Nano, said in a letter to the Italian foreign minister, Lamberto Dini, released as the group met in Rome.

Mr Nano said Albania wished the Rome meeting to "adopt realistic decisions that could restore peace and dialogue" between the Serb authorities and ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.

He said there was danger of a large-scale confrontation in Kosovo.

"The Serbian police and army are undertaking an intensive military operation in the border area with the Republic of Albania at a time when the Albanian population is getting con-



Protesters in Rome wave the Albanian flag and a banner reading: 'Milosevic your time has come'

PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREW MEDICHINI

vinced its only possibility is to organise self-defence."

Senior officials from the United States, Russia, France, Britain, Germany and Italy were meeting to map out a plan of "incentives and deterrents", mainly aimed at persuading the Yugoslav president, Slobodan Milosevic, to find

a solution with Kosovo's Albanian leaders.

The difficulty of agreeing a common international approach was underlined as the officials continued talking several hours after they were due to wind up.

Two successive press briefings by Robert Gelbard, the chief US mediator

in Balkans, were cancelled without explanation. A source close to the talks said the discussions might continue into today.

Earlier US officials said their negotiator would push other Contact Group members for stiffer measures against Mr Milosevic's government if it failed

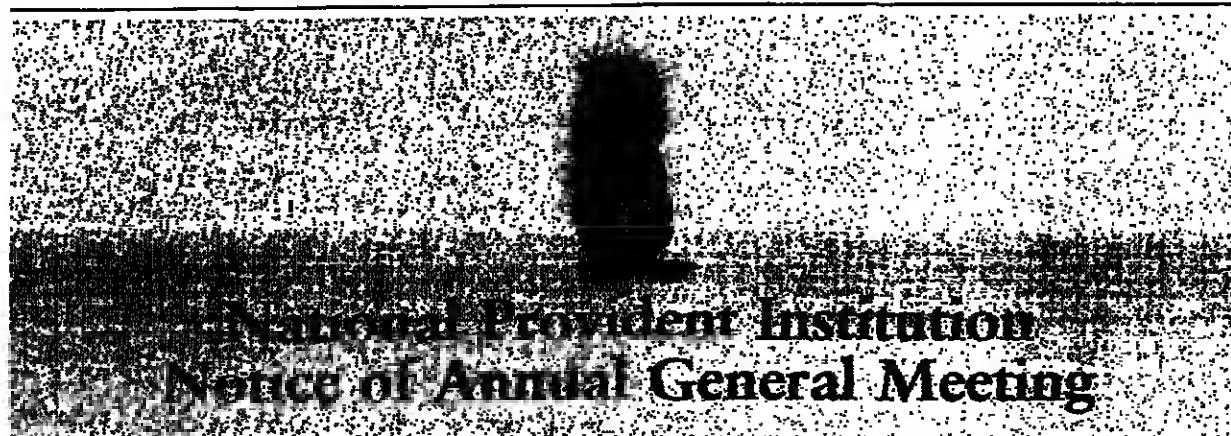
to lift its objections to outside mediation and scale down its police and military operations in Kosovo.

They said the measures could include a freeze on Yugoslav assets and a ban on trade with Yugoslavia.

As the meeting began at the Italian foreign ministry, several hundred Albanian demonstrators gathered outside to call for tougher action against Belgrade. The protest was organised by a group claiming to represent 700,000 Kosovan Albanians living in western Europe.

Yesterday's Contact Group meeting was attended by officials from Denmark, Poland and Norway, who recently visited Kosovo on behalf of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Prilep is in an area where the KLA has been increasingly active since Serbian police killed 80 Albanians in attacks on suspected guerrilla villages two months ago.



Notice is hereby given that the 162nd Annual General Meeting of Members of National Provident Institution will be held at the City Conference Centre, 76 Mark Lane, London EC3R 7JN, on Thursday, 28 May 1998 at 12.00 noon, for the transaction of the following ordinary business:

- Resolution No. 1 To receive and adopt the Accounts and Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 December 1997;
- Resolution No. 2 To re-appoint as a Director, Mr P L Macdougall, who has joined the Board since the last Annual General Meeting;
- Resolution No. 3 To re-appoint as a Director, Mr L M Edmans, who is retiring by rotation;
- Resolution No. 4 To re-appoint as a Director, Baroness Hogg, who is retiring by rotation;
- Resolution No. 5 To re-appoint as a Director, Mr J D Carter, who is retiring by rotation;
- Resolution No. 6 To re-appoint as a Director, Mr A C Barker, who is retiring by rotation;
- (Mr Macdougall, Baroness Hogg, Mr Carter and Mr Barker are members of the Remuneration Committee)
- Resolution No. 7 To re-appoint Coopers & Lybrand as Auditors and to authorise the Directors to determine their remuneration.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD: Steven O'Brien, Company Secretary.
Principal Office: National Provident House, 55 Calverley Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN11 2UE.

NOTE: A member entitled to attend and vote at the general meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and, on a poll, to vote instead of him or her. A proxy need not be a member of NPI. Proxy forms are available on request from the Company Secretary at the Principal Office. Completed proxy forms must be deposited at the Principal Office not later than 12 noon on 26 May 1998.



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Cyprus missiles dominate trip

James Meek in Moscow

TURKEY'S senior soldier, General Hakkı Karadayı, will shortly visit Moscow to try to persuade Russia not to supply sophisticated anti-aircraft missiles to Cyprus: a cause of increasing tension on the divided island.

Richard Holbrooke, the United States special envoy, is due in Cyprus today to try to restart negotiations between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot authorities.

Yesterday Yevgeny Anan'yev, head of the Russian arms export company Rosvooruzheniye, said the missiles would be on the island by August.

The Turkish embassy in Moscow said yesterday that Gen Karadayı, the armed forces chief of staff, would arrive on May 18 for a two-day visit. A spokeswoman said the missiles issue was not on the formal agenda but was bound to be discussed.

Russia has already sold 41 advanced T-80U tanks to the Greek Cypriot armed forces, who face some 30,000 Turkish troops in the northern part of the island. But Turkey's military trump card has always

been its ability to threaten rapid reinforcement or air attacks from the Turkish mainland less than 100 miles away.

The Russian missile, the S-300, would dramatically change the balance of power by giving Greek Cypriots the ability to pick off Turkish aircraft as they take off from southern Turkey. The weapon is similar to, and may be more advanced than, the US Patriot missile which enjoyed mixed fortunes in the Gulf war.

Turkey has threatened to destroy the missiles if they ever reach the island.

The timing of Mr Anan'yev's announcement, which merely confirmed Russia's known determination to see the \$125 million deal through, may have been prompted by fears that Mr Holbrooke would put irresistible pressure on Nicosia to cancel the purchase.

Russia, which cannot afford to buy weapons for its own armed forces and fears for the survival of its defence research and production base, hopes to sell the S-300 to Greece itself and has not abandoned hope of beating the Patriot in the contest to supply South Korea.

World news in brief

Gibraltar welcomes Madrid talks offer

GIBRALTAR broke its long diplomatic isolation from Spain yesterday by accepting an offer of talks from the government in Madrid. Peter Caruana, the chief minister, said the invitation from Abel Matutes, Spain's foreign minister, for a meeting before the summer was a "historic breakthrough".

But a proposal for Spain and Britain to share a prolonged period of joint sovereignty over the Rock is still rejected outright by Gibraltar. — *Stephen Bates, Brussels.*

ETA rebels hail Belfast pact

NORTHERN Ireland's peace accords could provide lessons for helping to end decades of violence in Spain's Basque country, the guerrilla group ETA said.

The rebels, in a statement published in the Basque separatist newspaper Egin, expressed "complete respect" for the agreement. "The most important lesson is that it produces an overall solution and that the solution it achieves responds to all the complicated aspects of the conflict," ETA said. — *Reuters, Bilbao.*

Supplies dwindle in Denmark

AS PETROL stations ran dry, bread stocks dwindled and ever-fewer planes landed at Copenhagen's vast airport, Danish unions and employers agreed to meet yesterday, the third day of a country-wide general strike.

It was unclear if the move indicated the sides were closer to resolving the dispute. About 550,000 workers are demanding a sixth week of paid holidays a year.

Joern Neergaard Larsen of the national employers' confederation said only that the meeting was to discuss "issues". The government has refused to intervene. — *AP, Copenhagen.*

UK pleads for 'coup plotters'

BRITAIN appealed to Nigeria to respect the civil rights of six men sentenced to death for allegedly plotting to overthrow military ruler General Sani Abacha.

A Foreign Office spokeswoman said Britain was unhappy that the two-month trial had been conducted almost entirely behind closed doors, and sought an assurance that the men would have the right to appeal. Gen Abacha's ruling council must ratify the sentences of his former deputy, Lieutenant-General Oladipo Diya, and the other defendants. — *Reuters, London.*

Mandela names army chief

SOUTH Africa's president, Nelson Mandela, named the war of liberation hero Lieutenant-General Siphiwe Nyanda as the new chief of the South African national defence force.

The appointment of Gen Nyanda, the first black to head Africa's best-equipped army, will take effect on June 1.

He will take over from General Georg Meiring, who stepped down this month after he presented to Mr Mandela a report that alleged Gen Nyanda and other senior officials were plotting a leftwing coup. — *Reuters, Pretoria.*

Marchers mourn bishop

THOUSANDS of Guatemalans marched to demand the capture and punishment of an attacker who bludgeoned to death the Roman Catholic bishop Juan Gerardi Conedera.

The protesters walked silently from the cathedral where Conedera's body lay to the church where he died. On Friday, two days before the murder, the bishop issued a report blaming the army for nearly 80 per cent of the 150,000 killings during Guatemala's civil war. — *AP, Guatemala City.*

Breakthrough in Afghan talks

AFGHANISTAN'S warring factions agreed on the nomination of religious scholars to a commission that will approve any peace deal, in a breakthrough for preliminary peace talks.

The negotiations were near collapse until the United Nations, which is co-chairing the talks in the Pakistani capital, suggested a compromise. — *Richard Galpin, Islamabad.*

Farmers pray for rain

HIT by the worst drought in years, Malaysian farmers offer prayers in their fields for rain, after agriculture officials urged them to seek divine help. In the capital, Kuala Lumpur, residents are raging at dry taps and patchy tanker supplies.

Water, the most precious commodity in the drought-stricken country, has been rationed since last year. Farmers have been told to conserve water and to use it only for drinking and cooking.

A symbol of dried, cracked earth and desperate farmers, a picture of a farmer praying for rain in his field was shown on television last week. The image was a powerful reminder of the plight of the farmers, who are suffering from the drought.

Peru battles name shame

MICHAEL Jackson Quispe and Patricia Neurona H20 Foggi may like their names, but their government does not. A controversial new law prohibits Peruvians from giving more than two first names to their children, or using names that are considered ridiculous or offensive. Officials, who say they have seen children called the Spanish words for "circumcision" and "cuckold", aim to protect youngsters from psychological damage. — *AP, Lima.*

The rise

ANYONE who has seen the new film 'The Siege' will know that the Israeli army is not the only force in the world that is not perfect. The film, which is a dramatization of the 1996 siege of the Palestinian town of Yassif, shows the Israeli army as a force that is not perfect. It shows the Israeli army as a force that is not perfect. It shows the Israeli army as a force that is not perfect.

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David Sharrock in Jerusalem examines how the party of ultra-Orthodox Judaism is laying ever stronger siege to Israeli secularism

The rise of the Torah's Guardians

ARYEH DERI can make or break any Israeli government. Leader of the country's fastest growing party, the seemingly unstoppable Shas, Mr. Deri seems at the peak of his powers as Israel marks its 50th birthday today.

His enemies claim that he is a threat to Israeli democracy, his followers the legions of Sephardi working-class Jews (from Morocco and Middle Eastern countries) who have been pushed around by the Ashkenazi elite (Jews of European origin) since the state's foundation — worship him.

The phenomenal rise of Shas, founded in 1984 by Mr. Deri and a Sephardi spiritual leader, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, has been driven by equal parts of politics and revivalist religion.

It is a "total movement" which caters to the social needs of its marginalised constituency in much the same way as Hamas, the militant Islamist organisation that supports violence against Israel, operates among the Palestinians of Gaza.

Shas — an abbreviation of Guardians of Torah — has built a national network of schools that provide an education to more than 80,000 children. Its summer camps, through which 50,000 pass every year, are now being mimicked by left-leaning secular peace groups who are terrified by the spreading influence of the ultra-Orthodox movement.

At the last general election, in 1996, Shas doubled its vote to more than 250,000, gaining 10 seats in the Knesset. Most political pundits reckon it will get at least 14 and possibly 17 next time, consolidating its place as Israel's third largest party after Labour and Likud.

Its electioneering techniques are controversial. In 1996 its distribution of thousands of amulets bearing the likeness of the 108-year-old kabbalist Rabbi Yitzhak Kadouri and the holy names of angels was declared illegal by the state's central elections committee, idolatrous by rival religious parties, and "a threat to democracy" by the left-wing and secular Meretz party.

Now it seems that Mr. Deri was successfully tapping into the nation's Zeitgeist. The Likud leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, secured himself a blessing from the mystic Kadouri on the eve of polling day and even the new Labour leader, Ehud Barak, is anxious



Israel at 50

nowadays to be granted an audience — so far denied. Every new poll shows the rising influence of the ultra-religious community, which is characterised by its right-leaning tendencies, the burden of its mainly non-working males placed on state coffers, and its opposition to giving the Palestinians their own state alongside Israel.

At a conference in Jerusalem this week Israel's leading expert on the ultra-Orthodox, Menachem Friedman of Bar-Ilan University, pointed to the tension points around the country where secular people suddenly find themselves next to religious neighbours.

A feud, for instance, in the town of Pardes Hanna, is "an example of culture war, of how close we could be to civil war", said Professor Friedman. "This is not an exaggeration. It is my fear that the two sides cannot live side by side any more."

Jerusalem has become Balkanised. The first question a resident is asked about a neighbourhood is whether it is religious or secular.

In the long run the ultra-Orthodox are in tremendous danger because of their own birth rate. They have to get the government to finance an enormous and rapidly growing infrastructure of yeshivas (religious seminaries), apartments and social services.

"It is beginning to strain the government and it is leaving the larger secular population feeling resentful, that it no longer wants to carry them. This is a potentially explosive dynamic."

Mr. Deri has been described by the centre-left newspaper Ha'aretz as "a new kind of religious politician, not a narrow-visioned powerbroker looking out solely for the interests of his own poor Sephardi constituency but a more broad-minded, worldly figure, able to build bridges to his secular counterparts."

A talk with the Shas leader at the party's smart high-security headquarters in Jerusalem's "Gates of the City" skyscraper failed to produce



Jerusalem's ultra-Orthodox community, a key support of the seemingly unstoppable Shas party

PHOTOGRAPH: DON MCFEE

evidence for such optimism. The vast office reeking of opulence — from the green suede furniture to the matches Mr. Deri used to light his pipe ("The Paris Ritz Hotel") — also seemed strikingly at odds with the party's low-income grassroots.

He dismissed Prof. Friedman's concern as "media hype".

"There's a minority on the left, and among the Haredim [the god-fearing] which is trying to start a war but I believe and I'm optimistic that we will continue to argue and that life will continue, because life is stronger than any obstacle in its path," he said.

But he was vague on examples of what concessions his party could make to the secular majority in order to

reduce communal tensions. "Our struggle is that a Jew who wants to observe the Sabbath should be able to," he said, in reference to the spat between shop owners and Shabbat inspectors that are becoming a Saturday routine.

A "war", Mr. Deri said, would start over the opposition Labour Party's plan to draft the yeshiva system's Orthodox students into the army to complete their military service alongside their secular teenage counterparts.

(Yeshiva students have been exempt since the state's foundation, when they could be counted in hand-to-hand; today thousands avoid military khaki by dressing in Orthodox black.)

"It's a very serious mistake... Students will go to jail

first and it will destroy the army," he said.

Mr. Deri is embroiled in a complicated fraud trial which stretches back years and seems to have no end in sight. A state comptroller's report found that while serving at the interior ministry in the 1980s he turned local government into a "pipeline" for the transfer of \$15 million to religious associations, many of them affiliated to his party.

His supporters say that Mr. Deri was simply playing by the usual unwritten rules of Israeli politics, or defend him by arguing that it was high time the Sephardi community benefited from "affirmative action".

This week the party threatened to bring the government down unless illegal religious

radio stations supporting Shas are given the same protection as a controversial right-wing settlers' station.

And there is no strong evidence that the party is educating its voters to accept a viable Palestinian state as the price of peace. Mr. Deri's own map of vital Israeli interests in the occupied West Bank seems to have much in common with that of the hawkish infrastructure minister Ariel Sharon, which Palestinians and some leftwingers have dubbed a glorified banister.

The only certainty is that Shas will play an even greater role in the next 50 years of their country.

In the short term Mr. Deri sees a second withdrawal of Israeli troops from the West Bank very soon. "Then we

will concentrate all our efforts on negotiating a final settlement."

And the long term? "It's clear that there is no contradiction between us being a Jewish and a democratic state. It is less Jewish than I would prefer but only democracy determines if we will be more or less Jewish. Politics is the means to achieving the option of living a religious life."

"If you have no political power you won't receive money from the government. I wish it were possible to separate religion and politics, but especially in Israel, which is a Jewish country, you cannot."

Last of a series

Jonathan Freedland, G2

Opening words on the new state

The following editorial marking the founding of the state of Israel was published in the Manchester Guardian 50 years ago. It assesses the British role, starting with Arthur Balfour's 1917 declaration, while Foreign Secretary, of the Government's support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, where Britain became the mandatory power in 1923.

THE historian of the future, looking back on the history of the mandate, may decide that it perfectly expresses our national virtues and failings. He will see in Balfour's ready response to Zionism the idealism and sympathy of the British people when faced with human suffering. He will see in our simultaneous dealings with the Arabs and dubious attempts to safeguard our own interests in the Middle East something of that Anglo-Saxon hypocrisy which so annoys our neighbours and once gave us the name of "Pretend Albigens". He will see in the Balfour Declaration a characteristic attempt to get out of our difficulties by taking refuge in vague and imprecise language which means different things to different people. The promise to favour "the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people" without prejudice to the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine led us straight to the terrible conflict which is now being settled by the blood of Jews and Arabs. Since we could never resolve the dilemma in our own minds, we could not solve it in Palestine. Knowing the knot must be cut, we lacked the will to cut it. The historian may wonder why no British Government foresaw the rise of Arab nationalism, since Britain did so much to bring it about, but he will realise that no one could have foretold the war in Europe and the terrible persecution of the Jews which turned Zionism from a creative movement into a passionate demand and from a disciplined march into a mad rush for safety. He will also note how easily our wish for "fair play" may degenerate into helpless irresolution. One can but hope that he will also be able to recall that, with our usual good fortune, our blunders were turned to good account and that in the end Jews and Arabs settled down to live in peace and friendship as Balfour — and the great majority of Englishmen — always hoped that they would do.

Clinton to veto UN dues bill over anti-abortion proviso

Martin Kettle in Washington

BILL CLINTON will veto a bill tying the settlement of Washington's United Nations debts to anti-abortion conditions imposed by the Senate, the White House confirmed yesterday.

The bill, adopted by the Senate on Tuesday by 51 votes to 49, approves the payment of \$926 million (\$590 million) in overdue debts but only on the condition that the money is not used to support international family planning organisations that support abortion. President Clinton will veto

the bill "as soon as we get it", according to the White House press secretary, Mike McCurry.

"They ought to just send it down here so we can send it back to them in the same day's mail."

Under the bill the US would pay the UN \$819 million in back dues and waive \$107 million owed by the UN to the US for international peacekeeping. In return the UN would be required to adhere to the anti-abortion conditions and to make cuts in its own budget and those of its agencies, as well as reducing the US contribution in future years.

Republican leaders said a presidential veto would kill any possibility of the US paying its dues this year, and that they would delay sending the bill to Mr. Clinton in order to step up pressure for him to sign it into law.

The Senate majority leader, Trent Lott, said there would

not be another opportunity to get legislative approval of the UN money. "In my opinion, this is it," he said.

But the prospect of Mr. Clinton accepting Mr. Lott's advice is negligible. The White House has repeatedly denounced the anti-abortion condition as unacceptable.

The closeness of the vote on Tuesday, in which six Republican senators voted with all but two Democrats against Mr. Clinton's opponents would be unlikely to secure the two-thirds majority in both houses required to override his veto.

Imelda all cut up... and cutting a deal

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Manila

WITH tears glistening on the layers of meticulously-applied make-up, Imelda Marcos, widow of the Philippines' disgraced late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, made a characteristically theatrical exit yesterday from the country's presidential elections.

"What's the point of running?" grieved Mrs. Marcos, perfectly coiffed as usual but bitterly complaining of "relentless injustice" before a crowd of about 100 supporters, some of them loudly weeping. "A symbol of greed, corruption and murderous repression when forced to flee with her husband from a popular revolution 12 years ago, Mrs. Marcos presented herself yesterday with her customary breathtaking chutzpah as a national saviour, hounded by those in power and acting so that 'true democracy will prevail'."

"To save the Filipino people from the ultimate infection of a possible bloody election, I, Imelda-Romualdez Marcos, now withdraw from the May 11 1998 presidential race," she declared.

who once sported a bullet-proof bra and famously amassed 1,200 pairs of shoes and 300 gowns on lavish shopping sprees during her 20 years in power — was speaking out from a court where her son Bongbong was testifying about a secret deal he says the family struck with the government.

Mrs. Marcos had no chance of winning the campaign she entered, effectively presenting herself as a "mother for all".

In the last presidential election she contested, in 1992, she came fifth. "This time she can't command the same number of votes," the university lecturer and political talk show host Randy David said.

But Mrs. Marcos still commands some political as well as financial assets. She may live in a luxury apartment adorned with valuable Impressionist paintings and sculpture, considered by critics part of the plunder of her years in power, but she still manages to attract support from the poor.

She also commands the support of Marcos loyalists concentrated in the family's traditional northern power base, if only a fraction of the five million votes she claims.

Polls show she still commands some 23 per cent of the vote, keenly sought after by other leading candidates in the campaign.



Sobbing at alleged official injustices against her by the Philippines government, Imelda Marcos (left) withdraws from the country's presidential election in Manila, where a small crowd of supporters rallied in her support

PHOTOGRAPH: PAT ROGUE

on bail pending an appeal against conviction and a 12-year jail sentence for corruption last month, entered the race only as part of her campaign to win a guarantee that she will never have to go to jail and can hang on to the family money.

At the time of the revolution this was thought to run to billions of dollars.

Mrs. Marcos, ever the demagogue in public, says she will consult Marcos loyalists to see where their preference lies before coming out in support of any candidate.

But she appears to be locked in behind-the-scenes bargaining with presidential hopefuls for her support.

As an example of what she may be seeking, her son says the government offered to issue a pardon in return for splitting with the family an estimated \$540 million (\$337 million) held in Swiss banks. The government says it knows nothing about such an offer.

Supporters of the present administration's hard-pressed candidate, José de Venecia, hoped recent negotiations had tied up her backing. Analysts like Mr. David suspect she will throw her weight behind the front-runner, Joseph Estrada, a former actor and old Marcos crony who is reported to have promised to recommend a full pardon if he wins.

Kanu rebellion isolates Moi

Lucy Hamman in Nairobi

CORRUPTION, debt and economic stagnation in Kenya have triggered an historic rebellion in President Daniel arap Moi's party, Kanu.

The finance minister, Simon Nyanjaa, told an all-party economic forum that the economy was bankrupt and high-level corruption had "run riot", creating serious financial mismanagement. He said the economy was "in tatters" and that the government could no longer afford to pay the bloated civil service.

President Moi immediately denounced the forum and its World Bank sponsors, saying there was a hidden agenda against his government.

But he is facing unprecedented defiance from Kanu's parliamentary group, which broke with a long tradition of slavish acquiescence to Mr. Moi on Tuesday and openly supported the critical findings.

When President Moi repudiated 82 Kanu MPs for attending the forum even some of his most notorious supporters reportedly muttered or shouted their defiance.

President Moi's lone stand against the forum is baffling because he had earlier called for cross-party efforts to resolve the economic crisis.

Strikes and protests against low wages and late payments have dramatically increased since Mr. Moi was re-elected for a final five years in January. Teachers, bank workers, nurses and university administrators are among those

who have threatened renewed action.

Sponsored by the World Bank and international donors, the economic forum was widely applauded for bringing together a cross-section of political leaders, Kanu MPs, cabinet ministers and donor representatives. It unanimously agreed to set up a 19-member committee, chaired by the finance minister, to salvage the economy.

Since making his outspoken comments on Friday, Mr. Nyanjaa has retreated from the limelight, to much curiosity about his fate.

His post-election appointment was seen as a poisoned chalice. Forced to announce harsh and unpopular measures — including increased taxation and retrenchment — Mr. Nyanjaa has also had to face up to the realities of a report released recently by the auditor-general. It points to massive corruption in government and particularly the office of the president.

Speculation on Mr. Moi's position is now rife. The bitter succession struggle in Kanu has come into the open sooner than expected and it challenges Mr. Moi in a way the divided and compromised opposition has failed to do.

Some MPs say Mr. Moi feels slighted because he was not invited to the forum, and subsequently seriously misjudged the response of the country and parliament to the escalating economic crisis.

He was due to meet representatives of the World Bank and European donors last night.

Suharto soldiers run torture centre

John Gifford in Jakarta

INDONESIAN security forces are abducting political activists and torturing them in a specially designed centre, a man who disappeared for two months this year has revealed.

Speaking in defiance of murder threats, Pius Lustri-lanang, who went missing in Jakarta on February 4, told a meeting of the national human rights commission that he had been abducted at gunpoint, tortured for three days after refusing to talk, and held for eight weeks in a 6ft by 8ft windowless cell before being dumped at his parents' home.

When he was first questioned Mr. Lustri-lanang, aged 30, who heads a group of activists supporting the government critics Amien Rais and Megawati Sukarnoputri, remained silent about his political affiliations. He was then bound, blindfolded and beaten.

"I had electric shocks applied to my feet and hands for so long they had to change the batteries, and I became so weak I told them what they wanted," he said. He was put in an empty tub. "The tub was filled while someone held my head under the water. One man told me people entered this place alive and left it dead so I should talk. I felt fortunate because I was not tortured badly."

Mr. Lustri-lanang has

since left the country. Non-governmental organisations say that at least 37 people have disappeared for various periods in the past three months, as protests against President Suharto have reached a level unprecedented in his 32 years in power. Many have been released but more than a dozen are unaccounted for.

Mr. Lustri-lanang learnt that other activists were in the centre by hearing their screams during torture. He discovered who they were at night when the radio was not at full volume.

There are six identical cells in the centre, which Mr. Lustri-lanang believes is about 20 miles south of Jakarta. All are covered by video cameras and brightly lit 24 hours a day. He was unable to identify his captors, but said they carried military-issue firearms and appeared to be members of the armed forces.

The human rights commissioner, Syamsuddin, a former major-general, agreed. "From my experience this sounds as if it could only be a military operation. This is probably the work of rogue elements. Nevertheless, it is the police's responsibility to find the perpetrators and bring them to justice."

Thousands of students joined an anti-government demonstration in Medan, Sumatra, yesterday, torching a police motorcycle before tear-gas shells forced them back.

Comment

Diary

Matthew Norman

At the Central Hall in Westminster yesterday, Henry Drucker appeared before Lord Neill's committee. Mr Drucker, who has raised hundreds of millions for Oxford University, is the chap New Labour asked, before the election, to write a report on party funding. After telling the committee why he believes that blind trusts — of the kind favoured by Geoffrey Robinson, the member for Cayman West — should be scrapped, Mr Drucker was seen in conversation outside the committee room with Alastair Campbell. They were discussing where to plant the story, and very sweetly Mr Drucker suggested the *Guardian*. All would have none of it. The leak, he said, must go to the *Independent*. But surely, this wise Drucker insisted, the *Guardian* would be better. No, said All — and the flashily clever thing here is that a BBC reporter, John Pienaar, was standing close by with his tape running (that's what they mean by open government) — it's going to the *Independent* ... because they'll write exactly what I tell them to. Marvellous.

MEANWHILE, that same Henry Drucker has been recalling a visit he made to the north London home of a Labour fund-raiser, Michael Levy, a record company owner and close friend of Mr Tony Blair. Halfway through the meeting at the Tottenham mansion, the noble Lord realised that he was falling in his duties as a host. "I haven't offered you coffee," he exclaimed apologetically. "I'm afraid you'll have to do without as none of the servants are about, and I don't know how to work the machine myself." Now that is the sort of genuineness you won't find in the *Independent*.

THE Diary's annual summer party approaches, and thoughts turn to the entertainment. My sane and rational friend Paul Johnston has agreed to recite from his forthcoming book *Why I Love The Guardian*, but with music in mind, we turn to the classified ads of *Freemasonry* magazine. The choice is impressive. Mavis Lane — "the rarest singer to enhance your Ladies Night" is said to be "well experienced, beautifully dressed" — while international tenor ("singer of the highest degree") Alexander Hood has a "large repertoire with humorous (sic) anecdotes at your request". My grandmother Mrs Bessie Norman, one of the country's top ranked Lady Masons, will be consulted, of course, but anyone who has enjoyed Mavis or Alexander, or any other Masonic cabaret, is invited to provide a reference.

THE gentleman's magazine *FHM* has upset Charles Bronson. Her Majesty's most heinous and dangerous house guest (his happiest moment was taking a governor hostage; "it was worth the extra seven years to see him cry"). After being interviewed for last month's issue, Charles told the editor from his Milton Keynes nick to complain. "A bit of a liberty," he begins. "A big scope like that, and you don't push some crisp ones my way." It's not on. Don't bite the hand that feeds you — cos it can cost dearly. I'm laughing all the way to the crematorium. Bless their hearts, the boys at *FHM* seem to think that Mr Bronson is joking.

ONE man who will not be asking his doctor for Viagra, is Luther Fingelhorn. The victim of an unfortunate reaction to stress, the 26-year-old from Hamburg invariably develops an impressive erection when applying for jobs. "I never get them at home," he explains, "but whenever I go for a job, my trousers practically explode." As soon as I walk into the room — boing. Up it goes." Mr Fingelhorn, who remembers with particular horror his audition for the post of pool attendant, has been in work only once in the last decade. And then only briefly. He was sacked as a bus conductor after suffering an attack while distributing tickets to a group of nuns.

This lily of the field does not need to spin. I have not met a more assured, less embattled performer than Tony Blair



All opposition is routed: never before have we seen anything like this

Hugo Young



LABOUR'S FIRST YEAR

THE most amazing thing about Blair's first year has been the absence of argument. It has all been so damnably successful. The points of attack have seldom been more than trivial. This Government has done a lot of things, and is on the way to doing five times as many, against the unenvying background of almost universal acquiescence. A political system based on the adversarial principle would appear to have collapsed. This obviously has its advantages for the Government, and is something it has done everything it can to cultivate. But as the defining context for an extraordinary prime minister, it is unfortunate. It does its bit to wrap him in the aura of an insubstantial politician.

The paradox is more striking in respect of the leader himself. Never has a modern British leader been less in need of artifice to explain himself than Tony Blair. I haven't met a more assured, less embattled performer, more confident of the position he is taking on any given issue, or more capable of defending it before any audience large or small — something, for example, about which Mr Thatcher had to take much more anxious care, from behind far more embattled than him. Consider this lily of the field, he stands secure in his soil, he does not need to spin.

In place of argument, spin is pretty well all there's been to talk about. The playing of the story, rather than the story, has been the story. Blair's capacity to build his image, rather than the substance behind it, is the first focus of criticism. Anniversary evaluations have seldom addressed achievement, always performance. Inevitably, the analysis of spin soon disappears up the backside of the spinners and the spin, but still remains, it seems, the object of greatest fascination.

To say that this is the Government's own doing is to undertake the matter. Spinning was at the epicentre of the project, and remains so. Labour's brilliant talents in the art of media manipulation, nurtured in opposition, have not become extinct. Most things Labour does are assessed first for the handling, and only second for the merits. In a larger way, the preoccupation with Britain's new image — cutting-edge, laddish talent, global pitch, Briticuit, all that stuff — also speaks to the supremacy of perception over anything so alarming as a serious political dispute.

The Government, however, is as much the victim as the beneficiary of this success. It is caught in a bind. Keeping the images on message and the media on side makes the handling of power simpler. But the very brilliance of the Blair people in this achievement diminishes the solid importance of what they've started doing. Being so clever with perception, they're thought to have no substance. Being so smart with soundbites, Blair throws doubt on what lies behind them. Thus is built a narrative of pseudo-conflict which is a proxy for the real conflicts that are

missing. Few governments, in fact, have been less in need of spinning than this one. That is the presiding irony of Year One. Spinning with its connotations of deceiving fiction, is a necessary tool of weak governments, but diminishes a strong one. It easily downgrades rather than enhances reality. By inventing an aura, it distracts attention from what will really affect the lives people lead over the next decade.

The paradox is more striking in respect of the leader himself. Never has a modern British leader been less in need of artifice to explain himself than Tony Blair. I haven't met a more assured, less embattled performer, more confident of the position he is taking on any given issue, or more capable of defending it before any audience large or small — something, for example, about which Mr Thatcher had to take much more anxious care, from behind far more embattled than him. Consider this lily of the field, he stands secure in his soil, he does not need to spin.

Because, of course, no serious argument has taken root against him. With only two exceptions, the palpable mistakes his government has made have been personal rather than political. Geoffrey Robinson, Robin Cook and Lord Irvine of Laird have produced extended periods of bad press, and the revelations around the name of Bernie Ecclestone took the lid off the sordid business of political funding which, whatever the Neill report proposes, will be a running sore of politics in this country.

But these can't be faulted, systemic faults, sufficient to rouse the country against the people it just elected. Closer to the bone were the reckless handling of single-parent benefits and the abject circumstances — but this was spinning again, incomplete in its nature, in which the decision to keep out of the European single currency came to light last autumn. Even here, though, you'd be hard put to see the basis for a profound national argument to match the seriousness of

what Mr Blair, actually, is attempting. There seems to be no such phenomenon anywhere on the horizon of contemporary politics. What there is, instead, is more like a national conversation, for which the Government has successfully defined the premise. The premise is that there must be social and economic change. Certain axioms have slipped into the public mind which virtually nobody is able to contest, however disturbing they may turn out to be. We talk of how, but not of whether, these things should be done.

It's axiomatic, for example, that schools must be reformed in myriad ways, and teachers, if necessary, berated with impunity by the Education Secretary. It's axiomatic, that the shape of welfare must be re-examined, perhaps with painful consequences. It has already been accepted that university students should cease to be feather-bedded. It's accepted, with hardly a murmur, that an ancient constitution should be dug up and remade. What once seemed

impossibly bold became, within months, somehow normal. What once was inconceivable in Ulster became, thanks to the intervention of government, more attainable than it had ever seemed, and was, once again, uncontested by any but a tiny minority of the UK electorate.

This is an unfamiliar brand of political reality. So is another axiom, also working its way into common acceptance: that economic management must be, above all, prudent. The memory of former Labour governments, brought down by their early reckless spendthrifts, and of the last Tory government, wrecking economic recovery at the end of the 1980s, is not just Mr Blair's own most piercing nightmare, never to be repeated, but seems to be accepted by a docile people as the reason why the present Chancellor, though presiding over years of plenty, can apparently give nothing away.

Much of this is a measure of sheer power. No democratic executive on the face of the earth is more powerful than a British prime minister in command of a buoyant economy and a huge majority. We

are not recently familiar with the sight of it. Not even Mrs Thatcher enjoyed the combination for long, and certainly not at the beginning of her time. Arguments of all kinds tend to recede in the face of their own political impotence. It's notable that even the judges, with the exception of Lord Bingham and his valiant fight against mandatory life sentences, have retreated from the tribunal of the people they felt compelled to occupy for much of the Tory epoch.

But the context of acquiescence is more than a reflection of power politics. The counter-case is intellectually as incoherent from the right as it is politically futile from the left. On both counts, it waits on developments. Meanwhile, I suppose, I'm clumsily describing what it means to have a government of the great, sprawling, controlling, capable centre, radical or otherwise according to your verbal taste.

Sooner or later, there will be conflicts. Much depends on economic blots that cannot be predicted and may not be controlled. Everything will look very different if the smell of a recession sets in, bringing Blair back to the level of governments we once knew and despised. Whatever happens, some of Labour's early choices will lose the allbi under which they've been allowed to live uninterrupted for the first two years. Once the shelter of the Clarke spending plans has gone, the Blair and Chancellor Brown will expose to public judgment the nature of the country they really want to make. The spending choices, whether on health or welfare or culture or universities, will produce many passionate and articulate enemies of New Labour who have hitherto been content to give it the benefit of the doubt.

Constitutional change, when the actualities appear, will also lose the security conferred by public indifference. The EMU choice, however late, will be another furnace of conflict. Throughout, there will be much ruminating about the quiddities of Blairism, what it really means, where it stands in the historic scheme, and, especially, what violations it has done to the democratic order of things by the very fact of its untouchable domination. Throughout, also, there will be its undoing, designed to show by every means of communication that Blairite change is, on the one hand, essential, but, on the other, as painless as it is consensus.

This message, I think, will be hard to refute in the first term. Adversary politics has indeed collapsed. It depends on the existence not just of other arguments, but another side to make them. This, regrettably, we do not have. The right are silent or loquaciously erratic. The left veer between panic and submission. All contest is routed. There has never, I believe, been anything like this, as the effect of one year in power.

THIS week, *Guardian* readers — being compassionate to a fault — will be tempted to feel sorry for William Hague. Leading a party which has neither talent nor ideas must be an unrewarding job at the best of times. But, as the anniversary of Labour's 1997 victory approached, the world's oldest boy wonder faced the daunting task of inventing something unpleasant to say about the most popular government this century. He chose to accuse it of breaking its manifesto promises. That is why the temptation to be sympathetic should be sternly resisted. No politician who says anything so stupid deserves the passing tribute of a sigh.

In 1997, Labour turned the theory of the manifesto on its head. According to the text books, a party sets out its plans for government so that — victory won and mandate obtained — it can claim that what it does has the approval of the people. Labour won, at least in part, last May because of what it promised not to do. It promised not to increase direct taxation, not to exceed its inherited public expenditure limits, not to renationalise the public utilities, not to increase the industrial influence of the trade unions. And it has not broken one of those solemn undertakings.

That was not New Labour's only constitutional innovation. Manifesto promises are normally used to break down the resistance of vested interests. In 1997, Harold Macmillan was advised that it was impossible to build 300,000 houses in a year. But civil servants were sternly told that 300,000 was the manifesto figure and 300,000 must be built. They were. Twice, under Harold Wilson, Labour was warned that the new government could not afford to increase social security payments. And twice, since it had been specified in the manifesto, social security payments were increased within weeks of Labour taking office.

Jim Callaghan made Britain's ambassadors to European capitals read Labour's promises on renegotiating Common Market entry terms. Then he told them that the promises must be kept. But New Labour's manifesto was less to justify pursuing controversial policies than to excuse its determination to be popular rather than radical. Speak to any minister about maintaining Labour spending patterns and the invariable reply is, "That's what we promised before the election".

UNTIL 1997, the twin theories of the manifesto and the mandate provided the justification for first-past-the-post democracy. Voters, the argument ran, chose between candidates after identifying political allegiance not comparing individual merits. In making their choices they were hugely influenced by the rival manifestos. That allowed the electorate to vote directly for a programme of government. The party whose candidates formed a House of Commons majority implemented the manifesto on which they had fought the election. No horse trading was necessary. The compromises of coalition were avoided for the people had spoken. The theory does have one weak point. Most voters have only the haziest idea of what the manifesto contains.

Gerald Kaufman's description of Labour's 1993 manifesto as "the longest suicide note in history" was absolutely apposite. All aspirations to government were extinguished long before New Hope for Britain was written. The manifesto was the party's last message to its surviving friends — few of whom had actually read its 37 pages. The

real significance of the manifesto will be fully understood by Peter Mandelson who, to my certain knowledge, has been obsessed since 1983 by the political truth that elections are won in years not days. The 1997 manifesto was published three weeks before polling day. By then Labour's reputation was firmly established. Voters supported Tony Blair because of what they had already imagined he was going to do. Despite being reinforced by the most successful publicity machine in modern political history, he did not completely get his message across. Some people still feared that he was offering a socialist alternative — rather more hoped that he was.

Labour's success was built on what amounted to two manifestos — one specific and formal, the other unauthorised and implied. No blame attaches to the Prime Minister in order to win the southern counties and the prosperous suburbs — and because of his innate honesty — he emphasised the contents of the formal manifesto for all that he was worth. But in the inner cities and amongst the dispossessed, he was fighting a losing battle against history. The poor had been taught, in good years and bad, that they were the Labour Party's primary concern. They certainly did not vote in favour of frozen income tax rates and Conservative public expenditure totals. If Tory canvassers had told them that a year would pass without a significant improvement in retirement pensioners' real incomes and end with an argument over trade union recognition, they would have dismissed the allegations as Conservative propaganda.

The Government's moral dilemma is easily described. Has it an obligation to fulfil promises that it never made? Nothing could have prevented a Labour victory (or at least a Tory defeat) last year. But millions of men and women who contributed to the landslide, believed that they were voting for a party of the poor. They had learned the hard way that when the economy is near collapse even socialists have to cut their budgets, but they took it for granted that, in half-favourable circumstances, a Labour Government would be on their side.

I was confirmed in that belief last Friday during my first visit for a year to the constituency which I once represented. For most of the people who live there nothing has changed. Nor does change seem likely. Welfare to work will pass most of them by. The council, still starved of funds, will not make much of an improvement to local services. There seems no hope of replacing the decaying schools. The one big bonus is the change in the Immigration laws which no longer separate husbands and wives. My old constituents suffer from the problem of being incoherently Labour long before polling day. They did not need to be bought off and they could not be persuaded that they would be sacrificed for victory. This week's criticism should not be that Labour broke its word. The real complaint is that it kept promises that it never should have made.

But nothing has changed

Roy Hattersley



LABOUR'S FIRST YEAR

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Millions of men and women believed they were voting for a party of the poor

Israel celebrates at it must seek peace

ISRAELI voters last night making the final decision to elect a new government. The election was held in a spirit of optimism and hope, with many voters expressing their desire for peace and stability. The results of the election are expected to be announced in the coming days.

Letters to the Editor

On the subject of the election, many readers have written to express their views. Some are pleased with the results, while others are disappointed. The letters reflect a wide range of opinions on the political situation in the UK.

A reprint of a letter from a reader who expressed concern about the future of the country. The letter highlighted the need for a strong and stable government to lead the nation through these challenging times.

Putting the heat on... A letter from a reader who discussed the impact of the election on the economy and the environment. The reader called for more action from the government to address these issues.

The heat on... A letter from a reader who discussed the role of the media in the election. The reader argued that the media had a significant influence on the outcome of the election and called for greater transparency.

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Israel celebrates But it must seek peace

ISRAELIS were last night making the annual jarring transition from sombre mourning for their war dead to exuberant celebration of a cherished independence. Normally their carefully choreographed rituals of remembrance and the squeak of plastic hammers make little impact abroad: this year the magic number 50 has provoked intense interest across the globe.

Half a century from the day Britain's unhappy mandate over Palestine ended, Israel can boast of stunning successes: the ingathering of the exiles has worked. Its population is 5.9 million, nearly 10 times what it was in 1948. One third of all Jews live in the Jewish state, speaking a living, vibrant Hebrew language that was confined to liturgy when Zionism was born. Israel has a GDP per capita almost the size of Britain's, more friends than at any time in its history and armed forces that can see off all comers from the Mediterranean to the Gulf — and beyond. And these achievements came against a background of appalling tragedy: the Nazi slaughter of six million European Jews remains the worst act of genocide the world has known. Pictures of gaunt survivors arriving in their promised land in those first heady days still move even the hardest heart. Auschwitz did much to mould the psyche of Israel.

But conflict accompanied the Zionist enterprise long before Hitler. And the war of 1948, a triumph, albeit a costly one, for the determined, well-organised Jews and a tragedy for the leaderless, divided Arabs,

turned out to be just the first round. Successive ones established Israel's overwhelming military superiority, bolstered by the acquisition of a formidable nuclear arsenal and driven by the grim conviction that never again would Jews be helpless victims. By its 30th anniversary in 1978, it had its first peace treaty — with Egypt — which somehow survived the invasion of Lebanon and the brutal and misguided attempt to solve the Palestinian problem by wiping out the PLO. Yet a decade later, the *intifada* was shaking the complacent assumption that Israel could rule for ever over angry Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, occupied since 1967, and driving home the point that there were strict limits to what force can do.

Israel has many problems. It needs to answer the old question of who is a Jew, and how to achieve coexistence between an intolerant religious minority and a truculent secular majority, who wish to live, in the biblical phrase, like *all the nations*, with big maces, sabbath shopping, and all the unkoshier trimmings. It needs to make its Arab citizens feel they belong.

Yet if mixed emotions accompany this anniversary it is largely because the search for peace has not ended. The late Labour prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, will always be remembered for the Oslo agreement in 1993, daring to shake hands with Yasser Arafat and acknowledge that a settlement with the Palestinians was an historic imperative — whatever had gone before. Rabin, trusted as a warrior, understood too that his people were striving for a normality that seemed to be part of the promise of a post-Cold War, globalised world where barriers everywhere were coming down.

Yigal Amir, a fanatical Jewish assassin who was opposed, like so many of his countrymen, to the idea of exchanging land

for peace, helped them stay up. His Muslim counterparts in Hamas and Islamic Jihad did their bit, ensuring that Israel, traumatised by their suicide bombs, elected a leader who has not made his predecessor's leap of faith. Hagging over percentages of territory for the next stage of Israel's withdrawal continues in London next Monday. But the omens are not good, with Benjamin Netanyahu, the Likud prime minister, insisting yesterday, after invoking his visit to Auschwitz earlier this week, that he would not be pressured into what he characteristically called "capitulation". And that is before the two sides, now separated by mistrust that make the promise of Oslo look like a distant mirage, have even begun to discuss the super-sensitive "final status" issues of Jerusalem, borders and refugees — those Palestinians who lost their homes in what a new generation of Israeli historians, freed from the myths of their founding fathers, now describe as the ethnic cleansing that accompanied victory in 1948.

Israel's independence was the Palestinians' catastrophe. This is not a case of spoiling the party by daring to mention the war(s). Conflict with the Palestinians and the wider Arab world remains the central, defining problem of Israeli life. Unresolved, it will remain not so much a blot on the country's achievements as a fundamental, distorting flaw. It is a conflict that is far tougher, far more deadly and debilitating than Northern Ireland's. No long Good Friday will be enough to crack this one.

This newspaper feels a special sense of responsibility. In the years that led up to Britain's Balfour Declaration in 1917, which famously "viewed with favour" the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine, the Manchester Guardian and its editor, C P Scott, did much to promote the Zionist cause. And in the 1970s, before it

was fashionable to do so, we pioneered the argument that there must be justice for the Palestinians. But our editorial line of 50 years ago remains as fresh and relevant as ever — testimony to a struggle whose fundamentals remain unchanged. "If the Jewish state is to prosper they must come to terms with their neighbours at the earliest possible moment," we commented as the state was born. Today we wish Israel all the very best on its 50th birthday, but urge it yet again — people and government — to try harder still to achieve the just and lasting peace they and their neighbours so badly need.

Mary Bell's guilt Tabloids must call off the hounds

THE questions over the Mary Bell book continued to mount yesterday: from the ethics of tabloid journalists camping on her doorstep, to her right to privacy now that the child killer has told her story and even been paid by author Gitta Sereny for her extensive co-operation. So should she lose her anonymity? Even the Home Secretary conceded yesterday she had compromised her own claim to privacy by "bringing herself into the public arena in such a dramatic way". But the injunction, as Jack Straw noted, was not taken out to protect Mary Bell but the privacy of her child, now aged 14. The child still urgently needs protection and must get it. Indeed, it is not clear whether the child even knows that her mother is Mary Bell. Her mother has not used her real name since she was released in 1980 after spending 12 years in secure homes and prisons for killing two toddlers in 1968 at the age of 11.

But should she lose her fee? The papers

which have been screaming loudest for such action have, according to Gitta Sereny, privately been offering far better fees for an exclusive interview with Mary Bell. There is nothing new about tabloid hypocrisy and few things are more nauseating than their regular bouts of specious moralising. Even so, Mary Bell made a serious mistake in accepting payment. The exercise provided her with other therapeutic benefits — clearing her mind and seeing her own case in print — without the need of monetary reward. It was bound to add to the deep wounds already suffered by the families whose children were killed. She would be wise to donate it to a charity nominated by the victims' families.

Should the book be banned as a growing band of MPs are insisting? Of course not. Gitta Sereny is a serious writer of manifest integrity. Yesterday's extract in the Times more than justifies the exercise for one crucial reason: it scotches the tabloid obsession with evil. All killers have to be demonised. Natural causes of crime, complex though they are already, are not enough. The supernatural is always invoked. It is not just irrational — with links right back to the medieval belief in the invasion of ordinary people by bunnymole (evil little men) — but dangerous. If killing is the product of evil, then secular society can be excused its failures. There is nothing that can be done. But Mary Bell did not kill because she was evil. She killed because she was badly and brutally damaged by her sado-masochist mother and the men who visited her, as yesterday's extract dramatically demonstrated. Child abuse can be tackled. Equally important child killers can be rehabilitated. Mary Bell is living testimony to that. She has posed no threat since her release 18 years ago. The tabloids should be ordered to call off their hounds.

Letters to the Editor

Impotence and politicians

THE launch in the US of the "wonder drug" Viagra is the latest attempt to exploit the fear and insecurity of impotent men for financial gain (Wonder drugs, Analysis, April 29). The obsession with the erect penis is at the heart of a macho culture which measures everything in terms of performance. However, over 20 years ago the American sex researcher, Shere Hite, discovered that most women orgasm through clitoral stimulation, and very few through vaginal intercourse alone. Pfizer will not be content with selling the drug just to men. A report in the New York Times on April 25 suggested the drug is now being tested on women in the US and Europe.

Terry Phillips,
Newport, South Wales.

FASCINATING to read about this new treatment for impotence. Fascinating, too, to see it headed by a photograph of Chris Patten, captioned "Britain's all-purpose facilitator". Will we be able to get him on the NHS?

Peter Bourne,
Stamford, Lincs.

[WAS puzzled by your strapline "Police forces assume they can draw a blank cheque to meet their spiralling budgets" (Fair cops, fair costs, Analysis, April 24). Apart from the fact that Detective Chief Constable Kohl is reported as saying: "We are friendly to foreigners in our country. But they have to know country. And if they don't want to be a guest, they can just get out." If the chancellor did say this then surely any neo-Nazi party simply won't vote at the expense of another. The Christian Democrats should reject Kohl as leader and the City of London should withdraw the freedom they so prematurely granted him.

Gerald Hartup,
The Freedom Association, London.

[AM confused by your report on elections in Saxony-Anhalt (German neo-nazis grab votes in east, April 27). Chancellor Kohl is reported as saying: "We are friendly to foreigners in our country. But they have to know country. And if they don't want to be a guest, they can just get out." If the chancellor did say this then surely any neo-Nazi party simply won't vote at the expense of another. The Christian Democrats should reject Kohl as leader and the City of London should withdraw the freedom they so prematurely granted him.

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On child killers and us

WHILE we can still take pride that British justice no longer exacts the death penalty, the events in Yeovil (Vigilantes 'getting upper hand', April 29) and the more generalised panic surrounding sex offenders and child killers (Sidney Cooke, Mary Bell et al) force us to ask some serious questions.

Retributive justice in the West holds that an individual convicted of a crime should "pay their debt to society" through punishment; in the absence of the death penalty, the most extreme form has been incarceration.

The simple and unpalatable truth of this concept is that at some point one must determine the relative seriousness of one crime to another and the severity of the terms of incarceration. Whether we like it or not, those convicted of serious crimes will eventually rejoin society. But the panic over child killers forces us into making some hard choices. Liberals will shy away from dusting down the gallows, but we are already in the process of creating a culture which is infinitely worse.

Those convicted of the most vile crimes will now be sentenced to a living death, either through perpetual incarceration (Hindley), or through living the rest of their lives in the process of creating a culture which is infinitely worse.

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returning to the dark days of the witch-hunt, the lynch-mob and unending surveillance, and free society will become little more than an open prison.

J J Charlesworth,
London.

VIGILANTE gatherings leading to violent clashes with police; is this really the way forward in dealing with "undesirables" like Sidney Cooke? While any form of child abuse is abhorrent, I do not believe victimisation and violence towards paedophiles is the answer. Can we not attempt to prevent these situations through a greater understanding and rehabilitation, as the Probation Service is suggesting?

While I disagree with Decca Aitkenhead that the "common cause of people will move on to something else", I believe she is right in that legislators will "be pressured into ill-conceived legislation" (These women have found their cause, but they're not sure what it is, April 24).

Paedophiles are not going to fall off the face of the earth, nor are they going to stop their offending behaviour through being victimised and forced underground. Constructive and workable reform where paedophiles can be safely monitored and counselled is needed.

Julie Keen,
Ormskirk, Lancs.

APPARENTLY not one of the liberal elite has seen fit to offer to accommodate Mr Cooke — not even in their country cottage. They are perfectly happy for him to be housed in a working-class area and then to condemn anyone from that area who vociferously objects.

J V Royle,
By Beaulieu, Inverness-shire.

THE question of who is making money over Mary Bell is becoming blurred. Newspapers which at the drop of a hat become our moral guardians, are turning serious discussion into a witch-hunt. The Times, which is rushing the serialisation of the book to cash in on the furore (Mary Bell claims she was abused as a child, April 23) is now distancing itself from the argument over whether she should take money from it. But Frank Fraser is deemed all right to do adverts on prime-time television because he "only did this to his own good". The two faces of amnesia in this liberal country.

Gregor Truter,
London.

WELL done the Sun on finding out where Mary Bell lives, and interviewing her neighbours to check whether they knew she was. This concern for the public interest is most commendable.

F B C Stray,
London.



Sugaring the pill

YOUR interesting article about medicine information (Hard to swallow, G2, April 23) was less informative about the purpose of the Medicines Control Agency, namely to ensure that all medicines on the UK market meet acceptable standards of safety, quality and efficacy.

The debate on availability of information reflects recent changes in our society. This was not an issue in 1968 when the Medicines Act was introduced in the wake of the thalidomide disaster. At that time the overriding concern was the protection of patients from unsafe, ineffective, or poor-quality medicines.

This agency's policy now is to make as much information as possible available to the public. We have an informative website, we publish

widely and provide a large amount of information in response to enquiries from members of the public. Last year we provided information to 45,000 external enquirers. That information included details of unlicensed adverse drug reactions. These are available to anyone, on request.

Dr Keith Jones,
Director, Medicines Control Agency, London.

YOU suggest women are under-represented in medical trials because "their menstrual cycles can interfere with results". In fact, ethics committees quite rightly will not allow research on new drugs, with unknown risks, to be conducted on females. To ensure unborn children are not exposed to experimental drugs, it is necessary to exclude women who might become pregnant.

Lena Sarah,
Lancaster.

Chris and David agree: more resources needed for schools

JOHN Carvel has put a mischievous spin on my lecture to Politika (Funding Blow to Schools, April 29). David Blunkett and I are of one mind. We believe that if the Government can find more resources for education it will prove possible to solve some deep-seated problems that have frustrated the best intentions of teachers. We both think, for example, that it is vitally important to improve the condition of school buildings and to improve nursery provision for young children.

But it is essential that the resource currently available to education is used to maximum effect. This means asking whether money is allocated in an equitable and transparent way to different local education authorities. It means asking whether LEAs and indeed central government retain too big a slice of the cake. As much money as possible ought, in my view, to reach the individual teacher in their classroom. We must

also be confident that management decisions in schools are as efficient and intelligent as possible and that teachers are using the most important resource of all — the time they have with the children — to maximum effect.

These are serious and commonsensical issues that need to be discussed by all who have an interest in education. Chris Woodhead, Chief Inspector of Schools, London.

ALTHOUGH it pains me to say he's correct, Chris Woodhead's claim that there is "no inspection evidence" regarding underfunding in schools is probably quite correct. This is because, according to the head of the inspection team at my daughters' school last year, inspectors are "not allowed" to consider the funding of the school. If you don't seek, you don't find. Neat, Chris, very neat. Steve Ingamells, London.

Now some good news about food

By John Armstrong

As consumers get more concerned about food problems, a specialist mail order business is experiencing a surge in demand.

The Scottish Gourmet operates in the Border Hills, with direct supplies from farmers and fishermen, cheesemakers and smokehouses, homebakers and micro-breweries. They issue a monthly menu newsletter, featuring almost one hundred fresh, naturally produced food items.

They include such diverse dishes as Truffled Venison Pate with Islay Malt, meat from organically reared rare breeds, prime pedigree Aberdeen Angus beef, and Smithfield Gold medal winning bacon. Indeed their bacon was described in The Observer by the late Jane Grigson as "The best in Britain".

Many of their food suppliers have won National and also European medals for their fine quality. The company itself has had a loyal support from members for over twenty years, and even such a famous discern-

ing food visionary as Elizabeth David was a subscriber.

Recently "Renault Magazine" described their wild smoked Salmon as "a unique treat", and "the clubs meals set a similar high standard." Of the cooked dishes they said: "Scottish Gourmet provides a service quite unlike any other." They concluded "there are so many good things from which to choose; stuffed quails, game pie with port and madeira, capon pie, venison olives, a sea bass marinade... goodness we've barely scratched the surface."

If you enjoy rare delicacies such as freshly smoked Highland Tiger prawns, rare breed heather-fed lamb, or even "world-class" haggis, then you should contact them now.

Write to:
The Scottish Gourmet,
1 Thistle Mill, Biggar,
SCOTLAND, ML12 5LE, or call them on (0845) 3000 375.

They'll send you free, no obligation details of how you can join the club, and a current menu full of goodies. Good news indeed.

Putting the heat on modern designers

[THIS attack on London Transport (Space, April 17). Jonathan Glancey raises two important issues: first, treating designs as a "one-off" separate from their context; and second, the lack of awareness of the need for any co-ordinated design policy, of the kind pioneered in the 19th century, to relate the arts to industry.

This died with the closing of the Bauhaus, but its influence was, and remains, far-reaching: not least in the work of Frank Pick and his team in developing a unified design system for the Underground, including architecture, interior design, signs, lettering, and even the tube map.

The official line seems to be one of delegation to "experts". Thus the design of the interior or the exterior of a tube train is a matter for the specialist: that of the fitting colours and designs facing the platforms of the artist.

Elsewhere, the bright and reasonably well co-ordinated colour schemes for the Thames bridges developed in the GLC design office are gradually being eroded; Hamersmith has displaced the last subtle colour with bright green dusted with gold, like a Harrods bag; Battersea has adapted a darker green and gold; and Westminster seems to be trying to match the pale

green roof of County Hall. Things fall apart... Michael Lancaster, London.

JONATHAN Glancey writes about how a return to the past in the layout of buildings would eliminate the need for air conditioning (Imagines being locked inside a concrete tomb, then slowly poisoned, G2, April 20). As chairman of the Engineering Board of the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers, I feel I must respond.

When our fifties and sixties building stock was designed and constructed, office equipment was low-energy — the

pen, the hand-operated calculator, low lighting levels, with never a computer, fax machine, scanner or photocopier in sight.

The quest for comfort has also been driven by the need to alleviate the effect of increased internal heat gains from our business equipment. It has been proven that high temperature can lead to low productivity. But such heat gains cannot always be dealt with by natural ventilation.

The key to success lies in the professionals exploring the potential of natural lighting, natural ventilation and passive heating and cooling at the concept stage of the design process.

Bryan Franklin,
London.

Net loss

[SURF the Internet an average of 40 hours a month. My monthly basic phone bill is \$11.26 (\$8.70 for unlimited usage. For this outlay, someone in the UK — paying 1p a minute — could use the Internet only about 11.66 hours per month. At 4p a minute (high rates) he/she could use it for only 1.16 hours a month. If I were charged by the minute for local phone calls there is no way I would be on the Internet over 40 hours per month. I believe Britain will not be able to compete in the information age unless they have unlimited use of their phones for surfing the Internet.

Lytle Michel,
Las Vegas, Nevada.

Latin lovers

WHAT would I leave out of my room for Latin (Leader, April 28) is the wrong question. The National Curriculum gives children access to a huge range of subjects. All we could ask is that Latin should have a place on the menu too. As children at 21 schools, from Cornwall to Glasgow, currently testing the Primary Latin Course keep writing to tell me, they are challenged and are having enormous fun.

B Bell,
Joint Association of Classical Teachers, London.

ACCORDING to your Leader, "English does have strong (Latin) influences". This is not true. What connections there are, mostly to do with vocabulary and not grammar, generally come via French. The Normans had an enormous influence on the English language, while the Romans left no linguistic imprint. With the exception of the tense system and the continuous forms of the verb, which are both Latinate, the grammatical structures of English are based on German and, particularly, Scandinavian, despite the misleading categorisation of English in the same sub-group as Dutch.

Children should be encouraged to learn foreign languages which may prove of practical use if they intend to live and work in British cities. Some examples are Hindi, Bengali, Chinese and Turkish. Spencer Alliman, London.

Gregor von Rezzori

History's lesson in hatred

GREGOR von Rezzori, who has died aged 83, wrote novels that memorialised a world destroyed by a hatred he rebelled against. He once recalled that his father came into his room, at the time when Hitler came to power, carrying a magazine which had the German leader on its cover. "We have lost our Austria," said his father. "Germany is the star now — but look at that face. I wouldn't engage him as a footman!"

Von Rezzori's father may have despised Hitler's face but anti-Semitism was something they shared, and which would help to destroy the world of Rezzori grew up in, a region of the Austro-Hungarian empire inhabited by Russian, Jewish, German, Romanian and Gypsy communities. "I have the Babel of this fabulous land in my ear: Romanian, Ukrainian, German, Yiddish, Polish, Magyar, Armenian, Gypsy," he said years later.

Gregor von Rezzori was born in Cervinatz, now Chernovitsky, in the Ukraine, where anti-Semitism was a constant hatred. His own father's hatred of the Jews, however, might almost have been an extension of his aristocratic snobbery, which be-

came a frequent theme of his son's work. One did not, for example, speak to bankers, or shopkeepers. When, after the first world war, Bukovina became part of Romania, the insecurity of the local sense of identity was one more excuse to hate the Jews.

As von Rezzori recounts in his best known novel, the ironically titled *Memoirs of an Anti-Semite*, the Rezzori family's own identity was not as clear-cut as it might have seemed. The aristocratic family name came from an 18th-century Sicilian ancestor who owed his allegiance to the Holy Roman Emperor and made his descendants Austrian subjects, subjects who worked as architects and civil servants.

Rezzori's father arrived in the Bukovina to look after half a dozen great monasteries of the Russian Orthodox Church but his boundless energies were directed into another passion, hunting in the region's huge forests, a gun over his arm and a sketch book in his pocket. His son would often accompany him. His refined wife despised her husband's energy, physicality and obsession with hunting.

After a boyhood of hunting with his father, Rezzori studied in Leoben and Vienna. For a time he worked as



an artist in Bucharest — he was later to illustrate his own *Tales from Maghrebinia* (1963) — and was in Vienna once more from 1934-1938, and afterwards in Berlin. When the war came, he decided to rely on his Romanian passport to keep him out of Hitler's army. He gambled that if he lay low, living off money sent by his father, he might be left alone.

For three years the plan worked, but then things grew more difficult. He decided to volunteer, reckoning, rightly as it turned out, that by the time the Germans had checked his credentials as an Aryan and given him the citizenship necessary to fight,

After the Anschluss the idea of a greater Germany, of a superior white race, all that which had been dear to him, was suddenly abnormal, ghastly and scary

the war might be over. But why didn't he want to fight? He should, after all, have been the perfect anti-Semite. He initially thought Nazism was wonderful, believed in a greater Germany and the superiority of the white race. "Had I not been a Romanian, I might have entered the SS instantly for its beautiful uniform and all that."

But the young von Rezzori was always forming friendships with Jews and falling in love with Jewish girls. He could never tell his father about any of them. "He was furious when I was in love with a Jewish girl. He would have killed me if I had had any idea of marrying her, nor

would I have had the idea, though loving her tenderly." The Anschluss of 1938 had been a terrible shock to him. It was then that he realised that most of his friends were Jews and that "the idea of a greater Germany, of a superior white race, all that which had been dear to me before, was suddenly abnormal, ghastly and scary. It is impossible to explain to somebody a surreal fact that from one moment to the next the world changed for me."

After the war, Rezzori worked in Hamburg for a time, writing propaganda against fascism for the regional radio station, and wrote film scripts for the German and Italian film industries. In the 1960s he settled in Tuscany, having married Beatrice Monti della Corte, the perfect partner for a man who loved life and its pleasures, was something of a dandy, could be wildly misanthropic but was always gregarious and charming.

Bruce Chatwin and Michael Ondaatje both wrote some of their own best work in the tower on the estate where von Rezzori resided, when Tuscany is at its best, the spring and the autumn. He spoke of great writers, especially the dead, as if they were his closest friends. "My good friend

Goethe, my colleague Schlegel", which in a sense they were.

"Romania was my Heimat (homeland), Italy my fatherland", he said, but he wrote in German, the *lingua franca* of the old Bukovina, and sometimes in English. For him, as for Alberto Moravia, the novel was a perfectly achieved autobiography. His books, especially *Tales from Maghrebinia*, *Memoirs of an Anti-Semite* (1979), *The Death of My Brother Abel* (1976), and *The Snows of Yesteryear* (1992) are the beautifully nuanced, humane and ironic voice of his memory.

"I have unfortunately a very good memory. I don't forget anything. My past exists with me every day. It's ghastly. It's as if time didn't exist. I am constantly reminding myself of my past and considering my mistakes from every single point of view, moral or immoral, achieved or not, ugly or beautiful". His books preserve the memory of all those he loved, the childhood world that has been lost for ever, and keep us awake to the hatreds history stores up to destroy us.

Desmond Christy
Gregor von Rezzori, writer, born May 13, 1914; died April 23, 1998

Bishop Juan Gerardi Conedera

Death and the peacemaker

THREE days of national mourning followed the death of Guatemala's Bishop Juan Gerardi Conedera, who was beaten to death with a cement block at his home in Guatemala City. His face was barely identifiable. Gerardi, who was 75, was a courageous campaigner for human rights in his country. Although still under investigation, he was almost certainly a political murder in a country which still aches with the pain of more than three decades of war, human rights abuse, and death squad killings.

Two days before his murder, in the Catholic cathedral in Guatemala City — where he had preached the homily so many times — Bishop Gerardi had co-launched the *Guatemala Never Again* report. It documented 56,000 cases of human rights abuse, 80 per cent of them perpetrated by the army in the context of some 200,000 disappearances and assassinations during 36 years of Guatemalan civil conflict which officially ended with the 1996 peace accord. The last three years of Bishop Gerardi's life had been devoted to investigating the past, in a bid for reconciliation in the future.

He was what every Christian leader should be. Since ordination as a priest in 1948, he served his people with inexhaustible pastoral commitment. In 1967 he first became Bishop of Verapaz in the highlands, a province where Christian leaders after the second Vatican Council. He then moved to El Quiché, and as a partisan for the poor, spoke out for the voiceless, amidst brutal oppression.

Civilian massacres, and murders of priests led him to close the El Quiché diocese in 1980. He was too close to his people to escape the consequences and was forced into exile to avoid assassination under General Lucas Garcia's government. He returned to Guatemala in 1984 as auxiliary bishop of Guatemala City.

In the early 1990s, he was delegated by the Guatemalan bishops' conference to monitor the emerging peace process jointly with Archbishop

Quezada Torunio. Gerardi also worked as co-ordinator of the 'Archbishop's Office for Human Rights and, latterly, became the driving force behind the Inter-diocesan Project for the Recuperation of Historical Memory (Rehm).

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Gerardi... reconciliation

launching the Rehm report. "The building of the kingdom of the Lord is risky, and the builders of it are only those who have enough strength to confront the risks."

Monsieur Gerardi is the first bishop to be assassinated in Guatemala. His slaying echoes that of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, killed in 1980 by death squads in neighbouring El Salvador. Like that of Romero, his death must be a spur to action.

An independent investigation into his death is essential. This is not the time to take the human rights situation in Guatemala off the international agenda.

Ian Linden
Juan Gerardi Conedera, bishop, born December 27, 1922; died April 26, 1998

Irving Brodsky

Solos with Bix

THE pianist Irving Brodsky, who has died aged 96, was the last living link with the great jazzman Bix Beiderbecke. He played on Beiderbecke's final 1930 recordings with Hoagy Carmichael's orchestra before the cornetist's death in 1931. Brodsky's career, most of it based in New York City, was to span much of the history of recorded jazz.

The tracks with Beiderbecke and Carmichael included *Georgia on my Mind*, *Rockin' Chair*, *I Don't Mind Walking in the Rain* — which has a short, futuristic solo from Brodsky — *Deep Down South*, and, most beautifully, *I'll be a Friend with Pleasure* on which Brodsky, Pee Wee Russell, Eddie Lang and others support Beiderbecke's solo.

Brodsky was playing jazz in his teens and began recording in 1922. He appeared on hundreds of sides with 30 bands and vocalists. His first date

was with the California Ramblers, a romping outfit of varying personnel and pseudonyms, led by the bass saxophonist Adrian Rollini. By 1929 Brodsky was broadcasting with Red Nichols and his Five Pennies, and recording with the young Glenn Miller on trumpet.

He accompanied the then hugely popular singer Annette Hanshaw from 1926 into the early 1930s. During the swing era from the 1930s into the 1950s Brodsky featured with both Benny Goodman and the Dorsey Brothers Orchestra. Later he worked in television, arranging and composing for Broadway musicals. He leaves his wife Elaine, a daughter and three grandchildren.

C J B Holmes
Irving Brodsky, pianist, arranger and composer, born 1902; died April 7, 1998

A Country Diary

COUNTY WEXFORD: "As in unlit thought" I stood there came not Lewis Carroll's Jabberwock but memories "whirling through the tulips" I was walking through the New Ross woods of my childhood. Here my friends and I raced so fast we seemed to be keeping up with the wind. Intent on our paper chases (warned by our parents, we never dropped papers, instead marking with chalk posts, stones, tree trunks — we were the first ecologists). Fast marvellous stretches heaved with bluebells, past star-white wood anemones, clusters of primroses and violets we ran from one wood across a stream to another, up and up through oak, beech, ash, chestnut until we reached the fields at the hilltop. Then speeding over four fields until we reached our favourite, the field of the double hedge — a hedge wide enough to run on with trees on each side. Now I walked seeking the season repeat itself in woods largely unchanged until, in a clearing higher up the river (where are found the best salmon in the world) lay below making its unhurried way to the sea. Even the country lanes down by the river (Barrow) are unchanged. We knew every turn and twist. Here, if great care was not taken basking round the corner, we tipped over into a clump of nettles. Then the search for dock leaves, the cure for stings, was intense.

Vast quantities of sandwiches were eaten, accompanied by locally-made lemonade on our ever-recurring picnics. I sat in the river, glad I was a child in those days. I rock with the motion of morning. In the cradle or all that is. I'm lulled into half sleep. By the leaping of water. (Roethke) until a movement alerts me — a fox running, lily pads jumping the hedge. "Truly What I love is near at hand/Always in earth and air" because, as Carroll's Queen remarks, "It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards!"

SARAH POYNTEZ

Death Notices

NEAVE. Elizabeth Neave, on 28th April 1998, aged 84, and her twin sister, Mary, were married in 1920. They were the daughters of John and Mary Neave, of the late of Lincoln County, Lincoln, 12th April 1998. Buried in Lincoln Cathedral. Donations to LEPA.

NEAVE. Edward Neave, on Tuesday 28th April 1998, aged 84, peacefully in his sleep at Lodge Nursing Home, Dursley, leaving a wife, Mary, a daughter, Mrs. M. Neave, and a son, Mr. E. Neave, all of whom he leaves behind. Buried in the cemetery at Dursley. Donations to LEPA.

BIRTHS. On April 28th 1998 to Emma Rose Hudson and Matthew, a daughter, Mrs. SANDERSON. Florence Della Hudson, born 28th April 1998 to Mary and Johnny, a daughter for Jacob.

Sid Cross

Pioneer of rock and ice

SID Cross, who has died aged 85, was one of the most outstanding of the new breed of tough and innovative working-class climbers to emerge in the interwar years.

Cross was born in Kendal, the son of a cobbler. By the 1920s, with his school friend Charlie Tatham, he had begun climbing the Lakeland mountains. For their first climb they borrowed a "coffin line" — used to lower caskets into the grave — from Tatham's father, an undertaker.

Cross soon revealed himself to be a natural rock climber and came to the notice of H M Kelly, one of the key players leading a post-Great War renaissance in Lakeland rock-climbing. He invited him to join the Fell & Rock Climbing Club. In the mid-1930s, Cross went to work for K Shoes in Kendal, and met Alice Nelson, also a natural mountaineer, and destined to become his wife. They formed a formidable climbing team, mastering rock, snow and ice-climbing, and skiing.

Their climbing entered a new dimension in the winter of 1937/38 when they attempted an ice-sheathed Bowfell Buttress. This climb, probably the most difficult winter route climbed in Britain before the war and now graded V — still one of the highest categories of difficulty — is characterised by strenuous crack climbing and delicate moves on sloping, thinly iced rock. Cross and Nelson were breaking new ground technically, but rose to the occasion by improvising a repertoire of techniques familiar to any modern winter climber.

Cross tackled the crux pitch using Nelson's ice-axe as a foothold while towing his own axe — an ancient implement given to him by the famous Lakes pioneer climber George Bower — in a crack and using it as a hold. Later on in the climb he used a scout knife, which he carried on a climb for splicing hemp rope, as an ice dagger with which to haul himself over the difficulties.

The fun and beauty of

climbing was the impetus behind these ascents. "The most perfect winter evening with a pure duck egg blue sky" — rather than the competitive drive which was then afflicting Alpine climbing. Cross and Nelson went on to climb another Grade V route, Scafell's *Plinian Buttress*, in the winter of 1937, with A T Hargreaves and then, to round the decade off, made an ascent of the extremely serious Steep Gill, on Scafell.



He carried a Scout knife for splicing hemp rope, and later in the climb he used it as an ice dagger with which to haul himself over the difficulties

again Grade V, and again with Albert Hargreaves, together with his wife Ruth. Steep Gill is today regarded as the most difficult and serious of the traditional Lakeland gully climbs, with sparse protection on the crux section and unthinkable consequences in the event of a fall. Despite this, Cross recalled the ascent as "fun".

They bicycled to and from most of their epic adventures. Walking 12 miles, ascending 3000 feet, doing a Grade V climb and cycling 20 miles

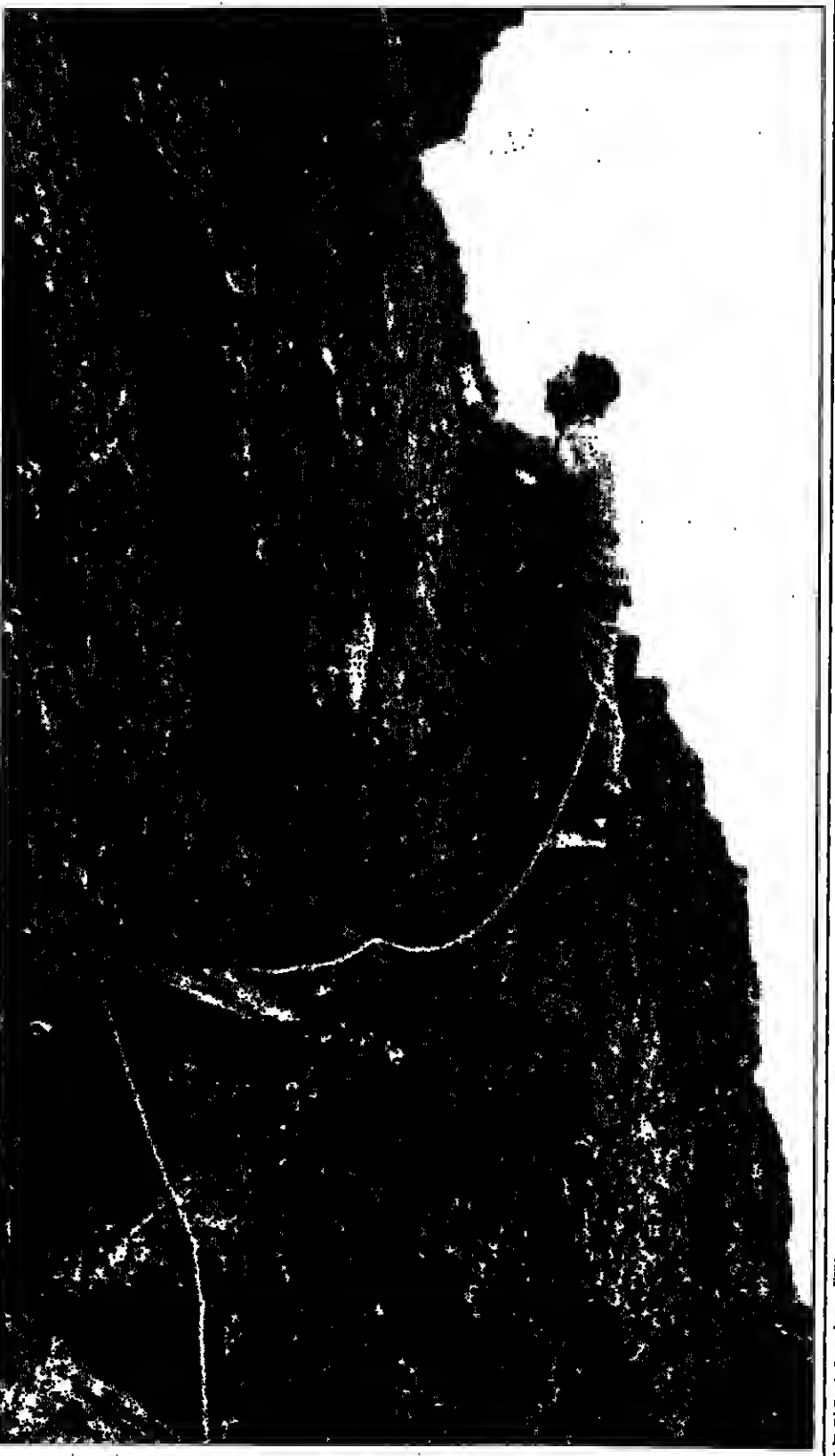
would be tough test for any modern professional triathlete. Doing it for fun and still being at work the next day indicates astonishing levels of fitness and enthusiasm. They were arguably the finest all-round British mountaineers of their day.

Sid and Alice married in 1939 and, after the war, with the responsibilities of a growing family, they put their energies into building a hotel management career. First, with their friends the Hargreaves, they turned a moorland inn at Boot, Eskdale, into a highly popular pub which was included in the first *Good Food Guide*. In 1949 the Crosses took over the Old Dungeon Ghyll Hotel in Langdale, where they created a climber's bar out of an old cow shed. The "OGC" became one of the key base camps from which the explosion of post-war talent was unleashed on the crags.

Cross became an unofficial guardian to the gangs of unkempt and impetuous climbers, among them such luminaries as the young Don Whillans and Joe Brown, who dozed in Wall End Barn next to the hotel. His good humoured authority sorted out the scraps which inevitably followed the activities of such high powered company. He helped set up what became the Langdale Mountain Rescue team and pioneered the use of dogs to locate casualties in the Lakeland mountains. He was later appointed MBE in recognition for his services to mountain rescue.

After retirement in 1970 Sid and Alice spent many winters in adventurous travel across the wider reaches of Europe but their home near Ambleside remained warmly welcoming to visitors. To spend a few hours in Sid's company was deeply pleasurable. His memory made for fascinating discussions about the climbing and characters which had peopled his long and busy life.

Colin Wells
Sidney H Cross, climber, hotelier and mountain rescuer, born March 18, 1913; died March 31, 1998



New dimensions... Sid Cross putting up a new Scafell route in 1938 PHOTOGRAPH: ALF GREGORY

Jackdaw



Brand babes

IF the 1970s was the Me decade, and the 1980s was the Greed decade, the 1990s is, unquestionably, the Branding decade. Once simply thought of as the pet pathology of admen and marketers, these days the idea that everything and everyone must assume a kind of instant identity has become an uncontrollable virus. It infects us in the macro level — think of Labour's much touted plans to re-brand Britain, or the Church's efforts to brand the year 2000 as "a new start for spirituality" — and, more disturbingly, on the micro level: last summer, an American business magazine pub-

lished an issue entitled "The brand called you". Example: if you ask a friend to describe their partner, will they reply: (a) he/she is a Brand warrior, a Guardian reader, BMW driver, or (b) he/she is from Bristol, is funny, articulate and has a great smile? The smart money is on (a). Brands have become codes by which we communicate who we are, a kind of shorthand which spans borders and back-grounds. Why this should be isn't so hard to figure out: the theory goes that in our increasingly chaotic world, social/private lives, we long for things (anything) controllable, predictable and familiar. And controllable and predictable and familiar are what brands profess to be. The brand called you, in Frank.

Ethan & Joel
NEON: What did you spend your pocket money on as kids? Ethan [Coen]: Pocket money? Neon: The money your parents gave you. Paper rounds, that sort of thing? Joel [Coen]: That's a good question. I can't remember.

Ethan: I made some money mowing lawns. What the hell did I ask it for? Records! Joel: Yeah, but you stole most of your records from the Columbia Record Club, didn't you?

Ethan: I bought some of them at the store. Joel: You could get like, 12 for a penny and he kept re-sell-ing them and then defaulting on the payments. Neon: Did you ever have any nicknames at school? Joel: No, I never did. Ethan: As a small child I was called "Branny". I don't know where it came from. Didn't mind it. Joel: I think it was the name of the service station in, er, Boulder, when you were really little. Or a convenience store. Before Fargo, with the Coen brothers in Neon.

Jackdaw wants jewels. E-mail: jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax: 0171-713 4966; write: Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Hannah Pool

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

1998 TOOK a long leap into the future in the Diary on Page 12 of the new Saturday section, April 25. It was rendered in French as "dix neuf mille quatre-vingt dix-huit" making it 1998. What the French are actually saying is "dix-neuf cent (or mille neuf cent) quatre-vingt-dix-huit."

HARRY GREENAWAY (not Greenway) took Ealing North in the Thatcher landslide of 1979 (not 1978). Page 3, G2, April 28.

GERRY MALONE, Page 3, G2, April 28, was declared to have lost Winchester on May 1 (not won).

IN A REPORT headed, Venture into the European jungle to slay the beast of globalisation, Page 9, April 20, we referred to the Stockport-based Plain English Commission. There is no Plain English Commission but there is a Plain Language Commission. Its address is The Castle, 29 Stoneheads, Whaley Bridge, High Peak, Derbyshire SK23 7BB.

PROFESSOR Anthony Giddens, referred to in an article headed, Robinsom's property, Page 18, April 28, is at the London School of Economics, not King's College, London.

THE CREDIT for the pictures which accompanied the Guardian Weekend feature about Ian Paisley in April 25, should have read David Barker, not Barber as printed. Apologies.

THE SUBJECT of the main picture illustrating the Analysis page on the future of work, Page 17, April 28, was the actor, Bernard Hill, as Yossel Hughes (not Harris), in the BBC series, *Boys From the Blackstuff*.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors or omissions in its pages. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor, Ian Myles, by telephoning 0171 239 5529 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Fax: 0171 239 5997. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk

Birthdays

Peter Ahrends, architect, 65; Dr Gerald Aylmer, historian, Oxford, 72; Jeremy Buchan, former Labour MEP, 72; Barbara Calvert QC, crown court recorder, 72; King Carl Gustav XVI of Sweden, 82; Claire Curtis-Thomas, Labour MP, 40; Dickie Davies, sports commentator, 85; Lord Diamond, former Labour minister, SDP peer, 91; Michael Elder, actor and writer, 67; the Rev Paul Fiddes, principal, Regent's Park College, Oxford, 61; Leslie Grantham, actor, 62; Tony Harrison, poet, 61; Robert Hazell, director, Constitutional Unit, University College, London, 50; Percy Heath, jazz musician, 75; Princess Juliana of the Netherlands, 89; Cloris Leachman, actress, 72; Alf Lomas, Labour MEP, 70; Lord McIntosh of Harrogate, deputy Labour whip, House of Lords, 65; Geoffrey Parrinder, emeritus professor of Comparative Religion, London, 86; Keith Povey, chief constable, Leicestershire, 55.

سكنا من الامل

Analysis EMU



New Labour's
first birthday
spin
8

All aboard for the eurocoaster

The run-up to the birth of the euro this weekend has meant a rough ride for Britain. Staying outside when our competitors join will bring turbulence to our booming economy.

By Alex Brummer and Michael White

ON Tuesday, the leftwing Labour MP, Brian Sedgmore, dubbed it "the most positive political and economic development in Europe this century". He was talking about the tediously-titled Economic and Monetary Union, EMU to its friends.

Hyperbole in an era of ever-faster change? Perhaps, but few of the politicians, business folk and voters who take diametrically opposing views of the project — a triumph or a disaster in the making — deny its profound importance to Europe's success in the 21st century.

It is creeping up far more quickly than most people have yet grasped. Large businesses will denationalise contracts in euros and oblige smaller suppliers to do the same. Marks & Spencers will accept euros. Tourists will keep them in their wallets long before notes and coins are issued in 2002.

The momentum is creating real doubt about the political feasibility of the Government's bet that it can declare in favour of British membership in principle — as Gordon Brown famously did last October — while waiting for greater economic convergence before taking the plunge.

Tony Blair would like to postpone his promised referendum until voters and tabloids have been persuaded that the euro is in their best interests — and in Rupert Murdoch's. That points to a vote after the likely general election of May or June 2001. Blair will urge a Yes, William Hague (so he still says) a No.

Meanwhile the Commons Treasury select committee report, split down the middle on Europe as usual, this week urged ministers to create a national changeover plan, just in case. It said also that it would take at least five years to see if the euro passes Mr Brown's five tests of suitability. But events may force the hands of both Blair and Brown.

It is almost impossible to believe that tomorrow's meeting in Brussels — May 1, the Government's first birthday — is the day when the euro really comes into being.

In Brussels, 11 finance ministers will pot aside their economic and political differences to create the largest currency union in financial history. Next day the rotating EU presidency (chairman: T. Blair) might even persuade them to compromise on

the choice of central banker — Dutch or French? — to run the show. When the 11 lock currency rates, in readiness for formal EMU on January 1 1999, they will have as large a gross domestic product (and stock of currency) as the United States.

The most remarkable aspect of this, particularly as far as Britain is concerned, is that only the most ardent pro-Europeans thought it could happen, certainly not that 11 EU states would meet the tough terms for debt levels, inflation and interest rates, set at Maastricht in 1991.

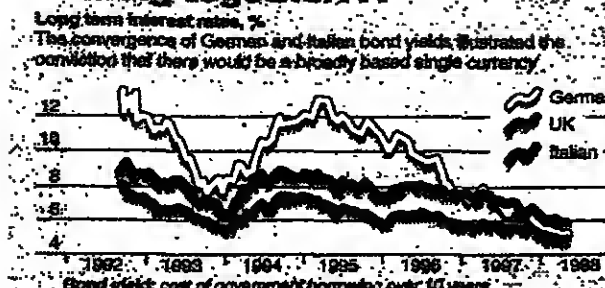
Even the most euro-friendly Tories, including former Chancellor Kenneth Clarke, who passionately believed that Britain should be in the first wave, was saying as recently as 13 months ago that it would never occur on schedule. Mr Clarke (he is not alone) still believes it is premature. But it is happening.

Yet most readings of the London media focussed on why it could not come about. In Germany the Bundesbank (and the voters) would never surrender the mark for a euro which would inevitably be weaker than the real thing. Italy's precarious financial management has been a job for years. Spain and Portugal were dodgy "Club Med" nations. Belgium, home to the EU, has like Ireland, had an horrendous national debt problem. France was engaged in incredible budgetary fudges, involving the pensions funds of state enterprises, in order to make the grade.

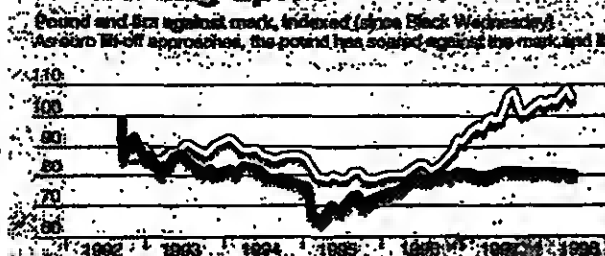
BUT while the political manoeuvring was telling one story, the financial markets were revealing another. The most stunning development as the final locking of currencies approached has been the convergence of bond yields — the cost of government borrowing in the financial markets — and the stability among the currencies of those countries committed to EMU.

It has been those countries outside the prospective first wave — notably Britain — which have had the roughest ride on the foreign exchange markets. As the euro birthdate approached, the pound has become stronger, rising some 30 per cent against the German mark. That gives Gordon Brown his most unwanted headache: a stream of investment from exporters and a surging trade deficit — £2.2 billion. Together they

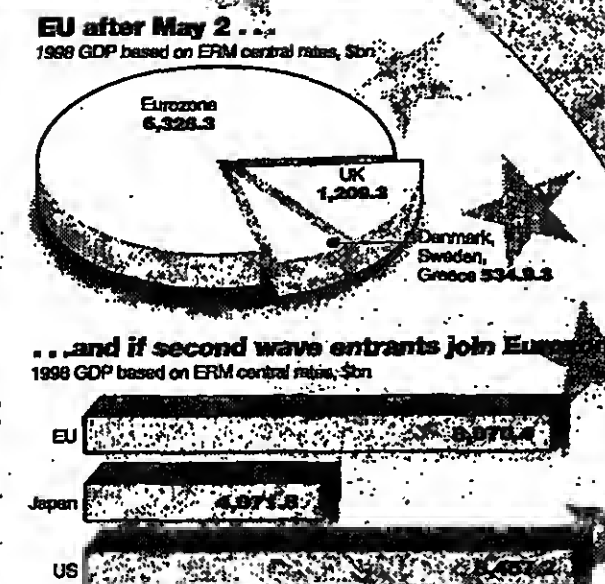
Coming together...



drifting apart



The mega economy



could destabilise the Treasury's plans.

Contrast sterling's rollercoaster ride with what has happened in continental Europe. Some 24 months ago, the gap between the interest rate yields on bonds (the equivalent of British gilts) issued by the Italian and German governments was 5.62 per cent. In February of this year it had shrunk to 0.38 per cent, and has now all but vanished.

In other words, the financial markets now believe that the much-mocked Italian lira is as good as the German mark, which it will effectively become this weekend (and vice-versa).

This does not mean that the advent of the euro signals the end of the economic, or for that matter the political, problems going forward. It is not the panacea that EU politicians have told voters about as they urged them to fresh sacrifice.

Those extreme right votes in France, Italy and Germany may herald a political back-

lash. British Eurosceptics warn of the prospect of tax transfers between member states to support Europe's 18 million unemployed — victims of the bankers' deflationary orthodoxy known as EMU, they explained.

Put another way, the International Monetary Fund forcefully noted in its World Economic Outlook report published last month rigidities in the labour markets — the difficulty in sacking people — could well be EMU's Achilles' heel.

IN THE IMF's view: "The EU cannot afford the high social and economic costs of delaying structural reform... Measures to tackle unemployment should be broadly based, emphasising deregulation and reform of social benefits as well as tax reduction."

But there is no risk-free option for Britain either. As a free-floating currency outside the euro eleven, sterling faces equally uncomfortable problems. After a strong period of

non-inflationary growth, heralded by the escape from the Exchange Rate Mechanism in 1992, the consequences of a strong currency are now being felt.

New Labour Britain faces a worsening trade deficit; an unbalanced economy in which services boom while manufacturing is crushed; the prospect of sluggish output, and rising unemployment, which could seriously damage the bold welfare-to-work idea.

Living with a strong currency — used as a hedge against uncertainty by foreign exchange dealers — nervous about the euro — could be as uncomfortable as being inside EMU. Ask the Swiss. "Safe haven" inflows of funds into their economy over decades, and EMU's creeping impact from neighbouring southern Germany have combined to stifle its economic existence.

A long period of stagnation has left Switzerland increasingly unable to sustain the competitiveness of its export sector: watches, engineering and ethical drugs. Public sec-

tor spending is under pressure. No wonder the long-neutral Swiss are finally thinking about applying for EU membership.

Mr Brown stresses stability, but certainly not the kind of stagnation and deflation which comes from an overvalued currency. But even if the pound was to begin to slide, as the British economy grows and the trade deficit worsens, there will not be much comfort being a small tradeable currency unit caught between two powerful blocs — the euro eleven and the dollar.

IF THE euro does become a desirable hard currency, as investors adjust their portfolios and reserves for a measure of balance between the two blocs, the pound could find itself tossed around in a sea of uncertainty between oow and when Tony Blair decides to call a referendum.

This is where the politics get dirty as in 1975 when a cross-party coalition, including all three party leaders,

campaigns for a Euro-Yes. Paddy Ashdown is not alone in believing that the Clarke-Heseltine wing of the Tory party (for whom Europe is the only crusade keeping them in politics) would like Blair to call the referendum before the next election.

That would wrong-foot Hague and split the Tories still further. But it would be a huge gamble, especially without Mr Murdoch's connivance. Some MPs and Euro MPs go further: if the risk of a No is too high, perhaps Blair should first stage his promised referendum on electoral reform for Westminster.

By staging the 2001/2 general election on the alternative vote system, the pro-EU coalition could entrench itself for years — a form of political convergence with Europe which alarms Bennites and Powellites alike at Westminster. Democracy is at risk, they cry.

Only the most callow MPs accept the Government's claim that the euro is an economic, not a political and constitutional, issue. But this is not the point: alone Britain of 1940 and many are prepared to pay the price. Being inside EMU surrenders sovereignty to Brussels bureaucrats and central bankers in Frankfurt. But being outside allows George Soros, Joe Lewis, Goldman Sachs and all the other global hedge-fund managers to park their tanks on Gordon Brown's lawn.

Sources: (1) UK Membership of the Single Currency, HM Treasury, October 1997; (2) UK and Preparations for Stage 3 of EMU; Treasury select committee, April 1998; (3) World Economic Outlook; International Monetary Fund, Washington DC, April 1998. Graphics sources: The EMU collection: what the euro really means for Europe, Drescher Kleinwort Benson Research; Detstream. Graphics: Paddy Allen; Pinbar Sheehy; Steve Villiers; John Wornley. Researcher: Matt Keating. Alex Brummer is the Guardian's Financial Editor, Michael White Political Editor.



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FinanceGuardian

Blow for Exchange as most dealers still prefer market-making system

Electronic trading 'a flop'

Sam King

SETS, the Stock Exchange's heavily-criticised electronic trading system, came under its most severe attack yesterday with many fund managers rating it a flop.

The Reuters survey of larger companies found that 82 per cent of fund managers questioned believe that liquidity in London's stock market has diminished since the system's October launch. And 90 per cent of those said the speed at which they could trade in the market had slowed while nearly half said it was now more expensive to carry out "bulk trades" of large parcels of shares.

The news is a big blow to the exchange, which is carrying out a consultation process with participants in the London market on Sets and had hoped it had faced down some

of the severest criticisms. Most damningly, more than six every 10 shares in the market are still traded through the old "market-making" system.

The survey, carried out by consultants Tempest, received responses from most of Britain's largest 350 companies and from four in every five of Britain's institutional fund managers — making it the most accurate of its kind. Tempest's Stephen Parker said it was clear there was widespread unhappiness with Sets in the City. "On most criteria, the centralised dealing desks give Sets a massive thumbs-down and are only conducting 40 per cent of their business in this way."

The exchange said it did not wish to comment in detail until its consultation process was complete. The findings are due at the end of May. A spokesman said: "Our consultation will be more broad than the Reuters sur-

vey since we will be talking to the market as a whole. We don't want to prejudice the process by saying anything more at this stage."

Sets has been sharply attacked by numerous City practitioners since its launch when the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, stood in front of a giant screen depicting the FTSE 100, which promptly fell sharply as he spoke.

Although the system was expected to increase liquidity, there have been complaints that it has made trading more volatile, particularly at opening and closing hours. Small investors have been warned by stockbrokers to avoid trading during these periods, or risk paying over the odds for shares or selling them too cheaply.

There have also been complaints from older players that the system was introduced at the behest of US brokers such as Merrill Lynch and Goldman Sachs, which

have since increased their share of trading in the London market.

The increasing domination of the US securities houses in the City was emphasised as US-owned firms scooped most of the awards given as part of the survey. The awards, the City's equivalent of the Oscars and presented by Allister Darling, chief secretary at the Treasury, are watched keenly because a high ranking usually leads to a pay rise or lucrative job offer.

US-owned fund managers Mercury Asset Management — taken over last year by Merrill Lynch — and Fidelity won the best fund management awards, while on the broking side, Merrill Lynch won two of the five awards.

SBC Warburg Dillon Read picked up two more broking awards, while the oil team at NatWest Markets, taken over this week by US group Bankers Trust, won the individual team award again.

How it works

● SETS stands for stock exchange electronic trading system — launched on October 20 last year.

● Under the old system, market-makers would quote "bid" and "offer" prices at which they were prepared to buy or sell a share. Market-makers would frequently take large amounts of stock on to their own trading book.

● Under Sets, orders to buy or sell are posted on to an electronic order-book and automatically matched, without the buyer or seller coming into contact.

● The aim is to increase liquidity — the ease with which a security can be bought or sold — in the London market, preventing prices from fluctuating so violently, with "spreads" — the difference between the price at which a security is bought by one trader and sold by another — becoming narrower.

● But it is argued that a large order placed on Sets now takes longer than the market-making system to complete, since every matching order on the system is "set-off" against that trade — which could run into dozens of small parcels of shares.

● Spreads have in some cases got wider because a "wildcard" price placed on the order-book can distort the overall price of the security involved.

Notebook

Finn's odds cut in bank stakes



Edited by Alex Brummer

THE row over who should head the European Central Bank is entering its final phase. Under the banner of the British presidency of the EU, Tony Blair is on the diplomatic offensive, ahead of the weekend summit, when the first eleven will be signing up for monetary union.

The Spanish have been dropping heavy hints that a deal is imminent.

The Germans, and most others, are still thought to be behind Dutch candidate Wim Duisenberg. The Dutch, in particular, are in "no hurry" mode over their claims that their man should get the job. So contentious has the issue become that — ahead of next week's Dutch election — Prime Minister Wim Kok has no alternative but to

see which was keen to see sensible reforms in the wake of the Taurus debacle.

The great fear among the bigger players on the London market was that abolition of the old system of quote-driven trading, in which market makers had the way would lead to a loss of liquidity and higher costs.

According to the survey conducted by Reuters, that is precisely what has happened. Of the fund managers surveyed 83 per cent reported liquidity had dried up 90 per cent said the speed of dealing had slowed and dealing costs were generally rated the same or worse than under the quote-driven system.

Despite the fact that the survey represents the view of 37 fund managers controlling \$28 billion of investors' cash, the Stock Exchange appears satisfied that its own internal soundings are sufficient to deal with the problems.

Maybe it is: but all the time it resists changes to risk loss, business to rivals like Tradepoint and could eventually drive some dealings — in what is after all a global marketplace — offshore.

Merger intrigue

THE possibility of a mega-European banking merger between Credit Suisse First Boston and ING-Bankers continues to circulate in London. Certainly, after the proposed merger of Citibank and Travelers — to form Citigroup — Europe's largest bancassurance groups may feel that if they are to be genuine global players they need to come up with something equally spectacular.

Both CSFB and ING are both big insurers and investment bankers: CSFB recently merged with the Swiss insurer Winterthur and ING was an insurance group before it became an international banking concern.

Clearly a CSFB/ING combination would not enjoy the same distribution network which Travelers will gain access to through Citibank.

Nevertheless, it provides an intriguing possibility. This is not least because CSFB has been one of the few transatlantic combinations — Credit Suisse and First Boston — to give the traditional bulge bracket a run for its money.

CSFB has demonstrated that as an investment bank it can be both a leading player in Europe and in the US: something which Deutsche Morgan Grenfell and the other Swiss contender, now to be known as UBS (the combination of Swiss Bank and Union Bank of Switzerland) has not fully achieved.

There is now no merger possibility in global banking/finance which causes eyebrows to be raised.

Last time this happened, when the reports of a JP Morgan-Deutsche Bank combination were ripe, the view was it could never work. Citigroup has changed all those perceptions.

However, ING is making it fairly clear that it does not intend to lose its virginity on Queen Juliana's birthday.

Arms protest renders BAe board silent

David Gow

BRITISH Aerospace, the UK's leading defence company, yesterday fell victim to classic guerrilla manoeuvres orchestrated by campaigners protesting against its alleged role in arming repressive regimes.

The protesters were also taking action against Labour's failure to enact the ethical foreign policy the party committed itself to on taking office.

BAe's annual meeting, at a heavily fortified Q&E Centre in London — where members of the Campaign Against Arms Trade and white-shirted security guards outnumbered ordinary shareholders — was constantly disrupted by shouts of protest followed by forcible ejections.

Throughout, Bob Baumann, BAe's retiring chairman, remained a model of New England civility amid repeated accusations that his company was aiding the killing in Indonesia and Kurdistan, of hundreds of thousands of people. But then he knew that it was probably the last time he would have to suffer such an assault.

Alone among the board members, seated behind plastic screens and divided from shareholders by three rows each of potted plants and company staff — he tried to engage in a dialogue. The other directors sat silently or simply gave up.



Shareholders watched, seemingly bemused, as campaigners staged a 'die-in' yesterday outside the BAe meeting in London. PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER

The CAAT's carefully calibrated campaign began outside, with the staging of "die-ins" by 20 protesters as shareholders arrived. Inside, scattered in groups throughout the hall, colleagues held up the meeting for about 40 minutes by chanting like a mantra: "Stop arming oppressive regimes."

Eighty people were carried or escorted out, one middle-aged woman shouting: "You have blood on your hands, change on you, how can you do this?" Another young

woman cried out: "Think about it, it's your brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers, that you are killing."

Dick Evans, BAe's outgoing chief executive and chairman from tomorrow, struggled through a review of the company's year and prospects for European defence consolidation as a group of Kurds and their supporters stood for a minute's silence on behalf of murdered relatives.

The remaining protesters, many of them beset, some of them lawyers, then began

an orderly series of points of order on the 14 official resolutions on the agenda, turning them into demands for the entire board to be replaced by delegates from Oxfam or Amnesty and for it to set up an ethics committee to work with the Foreign Office on a new exports policy.

Sir Dick insisted that BAe's commercial activities were compliant with British and European law, and that the company was working on a review with the Foreign Office. Mr Baumann, by now

serenely resigned to the disruptions, tried to explain company policy.

"We don't deal with trying to determine human rights. We are not in a position to do this. We believe it's a priority for all governments to achieve protection of their people from aggression."

The sale of arms is governed by rules laid down by governments, and we abide by these. If you have evidence of misuse you should go to the government," he said.

Former soldier and colonial administrator, Jake Jacobs, provoked applause among protesters and respectful silence from the board when he asked younger company staff: "Do you think when you are doing your daily job of the end-product? Do you ask if what you are doing is not only permissible in the eyes of the law but of God and, above all, of your own conscience?"

Mr Baumann had had enough, and he declared the meeting closed. After all, the votes were already in and being counted.

Midshires may opt to float

Teresa Hunter

THE Birmingham Midshires building society, Britain's fourth largest, yesterday said it would consider other offers, or a stock market flotation in an attempt to break the deadlock of rival bids from the Royal Bank of Scotland and the Halifax.

The Midshires had promised to pay windfalls of around £600 to its 1.1 million members when it agreed last August to sell the Midlands mortgage lender to the Scottish Bank for £630 million. That deal was scuppered by a higher offer of £700 million from the Halifax, which, in turn, was blocked by an "exclusivity" agreement with the Royal Bank.

John Leighfield, the Midshires chairman, yesterday said the society had offered to pay full compensation, thought to be around £5 million, for reneging on its original deal. He added that the contract had included a get-

out clause if the price looked unviable.

Mr Leighfield told an annual general meeting of more than 600 members: "As part of the deal, the board recognised that there could be the possibility of stock market changes in value. The terms of the contract with RBS recognised that if the price became unfair or unreasonable the Board need not recommend it."

He expressed dismay that three appeals for release from the contract had proved unsuccessful. The last, on April 7, included an offer of full financial compensation. After the meeting, the Halifax poured scorn on the Midshires attempt to reach a settlement with the Royal Bank. "We made an offer to the society which involves larger windfalls for members and we are surprised and disappointed that no real progress had been made, apart from a rather gentlemanly exchange of letters, which seems rather a weak effort," a spokesman said.

Cyber-dating success challenges traditional lonely hearts columns

A few keystrokes could bring love to singles, CHRIS BARRIE reports

SOON it will be not the phone call that changed your life but the e-mail. Technology is about to revolutionise one of the oldest predicaments of the human race — finding a mate.

Lonely hearts columns in papers and magazines are about to go on-line, bringing single men and women to within a few keystrokes of finding that elusive other half, and making publishers lots of money in the process.

Tele-Publishing International, a Boston-based company that specialises in running personal ads for many American newspapers, is planning to use the Net to allow singles to place or look at personal ads and then send e-mails or voice messages to the date of their dreams.

The company is also of-

fering users their own web page, complete with photograph and, when technology allows it, video tape.

Andrew Sutcliffe, president of TPI, said yesterday that the service represented as great a leap forward in single dating as the introduction of "voice-

boxes" 10 years ago. Just as voice-boxes allowed people to hear what potential partners sounded like before meeting them, so e-mails would be faster and more flexible, allowing the couple to exchange as many messages in cyber-space as they want before revealing their identities.

The service is an extension of TPI's existing business. Many newspapers, including some in Britain, such as the Independent and the Manchester Evening News, outsource their personal ads to the firm, which answers the call from the would-be advertiser, registers his or her details, checks whether the ad is for publication in the paper only or on the Net as well, screens the wording

of the ad and finally has it typeset for publication. The service is free to users until they respond to an advertisement, at which point they pay either through premium-rate phone call charges or a billing structure relating to the e-mails sent. Only the company knows the iden-

tity and e-mail address of the scheme's members. It is also responsible for policing the service.

Dating via the Internet is already big business. TPI employs 300 and has a \$100 million turnover.

Stephen Mundich, chairman of the Phoenix Media Communications Group, which owns TPI, said publishers would welcome the chance to make money out of the Net. TPI understands the market better than newspapers, said Mr Mundich, has stronger economies of scale and could offer publishers a share of growing revenues.

The move comes against a background of unease in newspaper circles that competition for classified advertising could become much stiffer as Net sites, the electronic publishing ventures set up by Microsoft's founder, Bill Gates, and digital television platforms compete for business traditionally the preserve of print.

Bids seal fate of Energy Group

Celia Weston
Industrial Correspondent

SEALD bids will be used to settle the year-long dispute between two US power companies fighting to take control of Energy Group of the UK.

The winner will be announced late tomorrow afternoon. The takeover panel, which operates as the City's informal mechanism for regulating takeovers, stepped in last week to try to end the battle and the uncertainty about future ownership of the UK electricity and coal company.

In an adjudication released after the market closed yesterday, the panel said that Texas Utilities and PacificCorp, of Ore-

gon, must submit sealed bids by mid-afternoon tomorrow. The panel added that any increased bid must be above \$400, the level of the last Texas offer, which valued Energy Group at \$4.5 billion.

This is 20p more than the last PacificCorp bid of \$390. Whichever company wins control of Energy Group, its Eastern Electricity business, of Ipswich, will become the eighth of the original 12 privatised regional electricity companies to fall into American hands.

Under the settlement deal proposed by the panel, the two US companies have been asked to either submit a fixed sum bid, or a referential bid which specifies that if their rival makes a higher bid, they will top that bid by at least 5p up to a pre-determined maximum.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.51	Germany 2.81/83	Malaysia 6.20/9	Singapore 2.59
Austria 20.50	Greece 515.19	Mexico 0.63/60	South Africa 1.19
Belgium 20.15	Hong Kong 12.55	Netherlands 3.26/81	Sweden 246.11
Canada 2.34	India 65.30/5	New Zealand 2.94	Switzerland 2.42
Cyprus 0.68/82	Ireland 1.15/42	Norway 12.12	Turkey 330.51/0
Denmark 11.18	Israel 5.20	Portugal 237.55	USA 1.55/58
Finland 8.52/9	Italy 2.90/2	Saudi Arabia 6.14	
France 5.75			

Supplied by NatWest (excluding rupee, shaker and riyal)

Racing
Going
looks
good
for
Xaar

NICK LEES, clerk of the course, walked the Rowley Mile at Goodwood yesterday and predicted good ground for the Sprint Stakes racing which starts tomorrow.

The going has dried out, a remarkable testimony to the track which has soaked up nearly 100mm of rain since the beginning of April," said

Mr Lees. "We had a dry night on Tuesday and no further rain until mid-afternoon today. The forecast is quite dry and the going could be nearly perfect come

tomorrow. The new 1100m race, the Sprint Stakes, is a new addition to the British racing calendar and it is hoped that it will attract a lot of interest from the public and the media.

Leading 1100m...

with 1100m...

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SportsGuardian

Race for the championship

Premiership: Arsenal 1 Derby County 0

Petit takes Arsenal to title brink

David Lacey

A WONDERFUL goal from Emmanuel Petit eased Arsenal's growing anxieties against combative Derby County side at Highbury last night but not before they had lost Dennis Bergkamp with a pulled hamstring that could keep him out of the FA Cup final. The Dutchman's short and unhappy evening also included a missed penalty.

Derby were the first side to beat them in the league this season, although their 3-0 victory at Pride Park now seemed a long way away. That win, on November 1, had turned out to be a watershed for Jim Smith's team and they came to Highbury looking slightly less chipper following a run of seven games which had brought them just one victory, along with heavy home defeats, 5-0 and 4-0 by Leeds and Leicester.

Logic, therefore, suggested that Arsenal, unbeaten in the league since mid-December and with eight successive Premiership victories behind them, would simply march past Derby towards the title but in football logic, as Manchester United are discovering, can never be trusted. Even so, Alex Ferguson's hope of an Arsenal collapse appeared even as he expressed it.

Not that Derby had come to Highbury to be walked over. Their early football was full of pace and bustle, with Lee Carsley and Darryl Powell challenging Patrick Vieira

and Emmanuel Petit for their customary command in midfield while Jacob Laursen dogged the footsteps of Bergkamp.

There seemed little untoward as Chris Powell challenged Nicolas Anelka near the byline following a throw-in on the right after 13 minutes but the referee Neale Barry decided the Derby defender had fouled the Frenchman. Bergkamp, however, proved ungrateful, placing his penalty tamely to the right of Mart Poom and seeing the Estonian make a relatively easy save.

Highbury howled its frustration but Arsenal took the disappointment in their stride, gradually establishing familiar links between defence and attack with Bergkamp, Anelka and Marc Overmars gnawing away at the heart of the Derby defence. Midway through the first half Anelka's neat first-time lay-off sent Overmars through for a shot that skimmed the bar. Derby, however, continued

to disrupt Arsenal's movements through their refusal to allow the opposition any time on the ball. Little squabbles broke out — between Tony Adams and Christian Dailly, and Petit and Paulo Wanchope — which were hardly conducive to Arsenal's peace of mind.

Nor was the loss of a limping Bergkamp on the half-hour. The Dutchman pulled a muscle when he slipped as Laursen challenged him for the ball and was replaced by Christopher Wreh, an altogether different kind of player.

For Arsenal the evening appeared to be going horribly wrong, but only for five minutes. Then Overmars, beaten to the ball by Rory Delap, managed to toe-poke the ball away from the defender, leaving Petit to drive a marvellous left-footed shot inside the near post from 25 yards.

But for Poom the contest would have been settled by half-time. The Derby goalkeeper kept out a thunderous drive from Vieira and then grabbed the ball with one hand as Overmars ended a dash through the defence with a shot which threatened to steal in at the near post.

A second goal for Arsenal all but arrived a minute past the hour. Petit struck a free-kick low through the wall of defenders and Poom, seeing it late, could only parry the shot. Wreh pounced on the rebound but only to shoot against the goalkeeper.

Arsenal (4-4-2) Soames, Dixon, Keown, Adams, Winterburn, Parlour, Vieira, Petit, Overmars, Bergkamp, Anelka.

Derby County (3-5-2) Poom, Rowett, Laursen, Lacey, Carsley, Corsey, Bohinen, D Powell, C Powell, Sandridge, Wandoppe.

Referee N Barry (Southampton).

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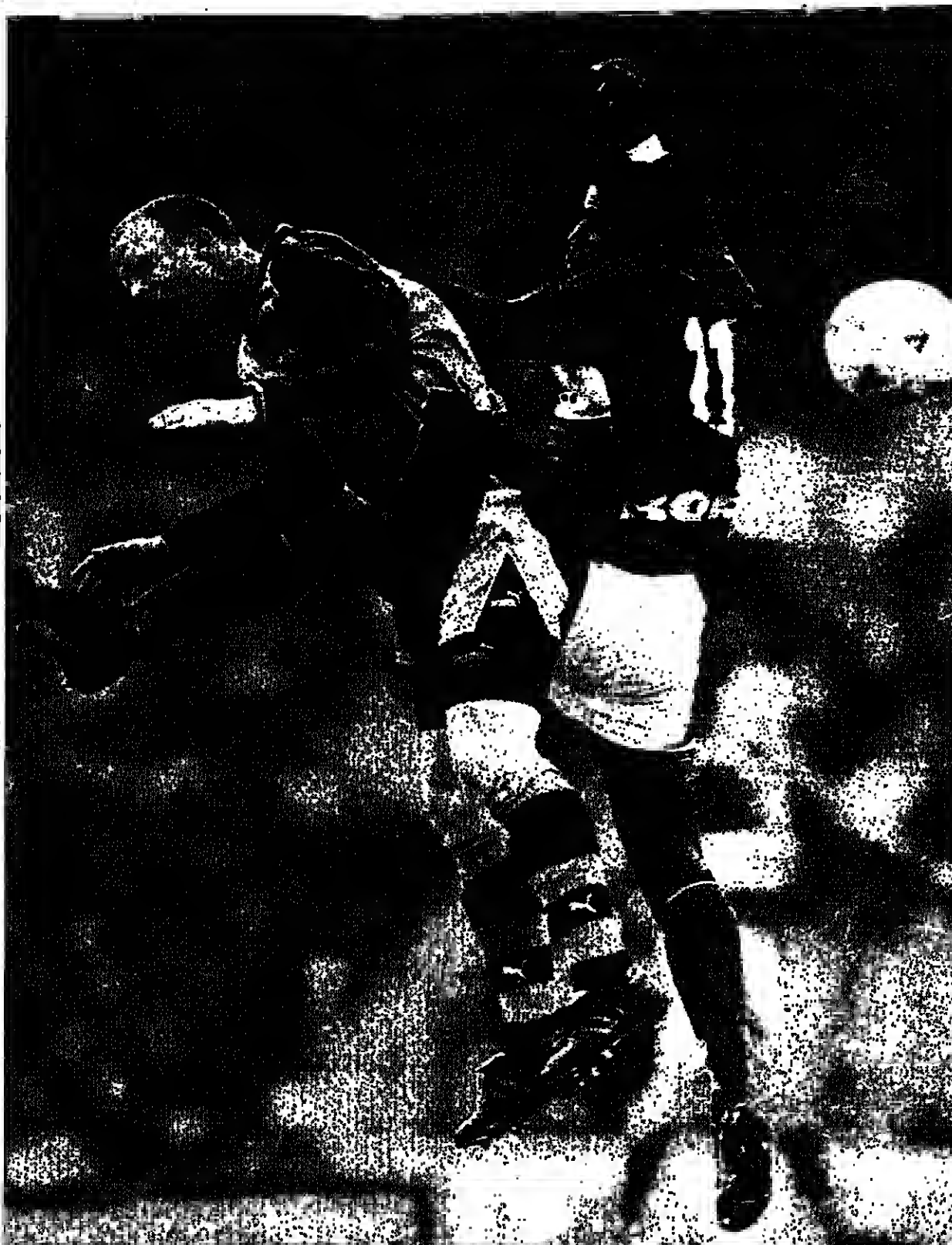
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Referee N Barry (Southampton).



Pain on parting... Wolves' Neil Emblen suffers after a challenge with Boro's Hamilton Ricard last night. MICHAEL STEELE

Stewart poised to lead England

Mike Selvey

THE choice of the next England Test captain has been whittled down to two names. According to the chairman of selectors David Graveney, it will be either Alec Stewart or Nasser Hussain who will be announced as Mike Atherton's successor next Tuesday.

Although it is certain to be a close call, the likelihood is that Stewart will be asked to lead the side against the South Africans this summer and, probably, in Australia next winter.

With the World Cup still a year away, the principle of having a separate captain for the one-day side seems certain to continue. Adam Hildoke being reappointed despite the lack of success in the Caribbean.

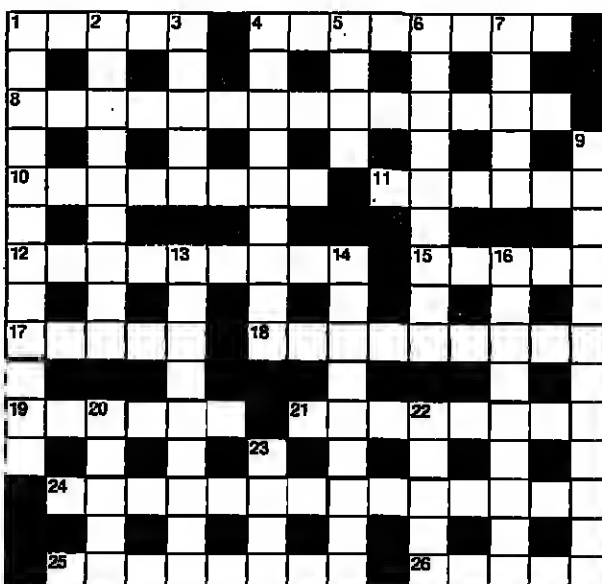
The search for Atherton's replacement had centred on half a dozen candidates. Stewart and Hussain, vice-captains both at some stage, were the front runners but Hildoke and Mark Ramprakash were also in the frame and Matthew Maynard and David Byas were outsiders.

"We've looked at various candidates, all of them with strong claims," said Graveney, whose fellow selectors are Graham Gooch and Mike Gatting. "But I think you can say it is between Stewart and Hussain, both of whom have been long-term vice-captains and would be in our strongest team."

"We are going with the Australian method in that respect and I think we need to look at the sort of team we want to field this summer." Central to the deliberations has been Stewart's role within the team, either as specialist opening batsman or, with his wicketkeeping, as world-class all-rounder. Stewart, an enormously fit and enthusiastic 35-year-old, is confident that adding leadership to the equation would not be a problem.

Guardian Crossword No 21,262

Set by Janus

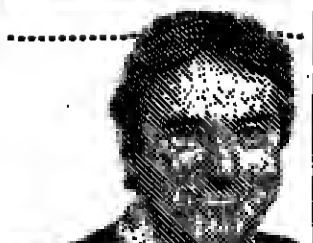


- Across**
- 1 Some extra-spicy jelly (5)
 - 4 Spoilt child given publicity (6)
 - 8 Basic requirements for naturists? (4,10)
 - 10 Lists with nothing in but birds (5)
 - 11 Pay for couch (6)
 - 12 Holiday attire seen in each bar we try (6)
 - 15 Liberal politician without a drink (5)
 - 17 Unfit to hold record in tin production (5)
 - 18 Management's way of applying remedies (5)
 - 19 Leader getting some booking and hissing (6)
 - 21 Go abroad to find English regtime spreading (5)
 - 24 Heterosexual invaders with geometrical features? (8,6)
 - 25 Tie, for example, spoon to flower (5)

- Down**
- 1 Where in London a novice has to be right on the game (6,6)
 - 2 Boy concealing crime at the vicarage (9)
 - 3 Revolutionary way to box (5)
 - 4 Is run perhaps by gentleman rebel (9)
 - 5 For young horse raising some money no problem (4)
 - 6 Wandering air in tent perhaps (9)
 - 7 Showy splendour of leading character in fantastic tale (5)
 - 9 Was meener without having to trust in ruthless fashion (12)
 - 13 Bring forth young at rear of car (9)
 - 14 Tree Homer used to measure current flow? (5)
 - 16 Quiet clergyman was unwell but succeeded (9)
 - 20 Can it really be partly saltpetre? (5)
 - 22 Animal writer in France (5)
 - 23 Shivering fit socially acceptable in later years (4)

Solution tomorrow

22 Stuck? Then call our solutions line on 0800 338 222. Calls cost 60p per minute at all times. Service supplied by ATS.



Frank Keating

Huff but no puff as a sacred house blows down

THE Stallist edict arrived with yesterday's post, having doubtless been delivered in the dark hours to the sound of jack-boots on the wet, cobble street. In the way of such despotic decrees, the command brooked no discussion. It was from the Cricket Writers' Club and said: "The secretary has been instructed to write to the relevant authorities to request the imposition of a smoking ban inside the working areas of all press boxes and media centres."

So Big Brother's Politically Correct SS Police have at last stormed their final citadel.

Some of us only agreed to work in the first place down in our newspaper's basement in the toy department because we knew ancient history demanded that sportswriters should, fearlessly and without reprieve, drink like fish, swear like troopers and smoke like chimneys.

Not any more, and one can only pile cliché upon cliché about poachers and gamekeepers, asylums and lunatics, and quote an erstwhile member of our fraternity, Norman Mailer: "The quantities of nicotine and booze necessary to lubricate such racing of mental gears in the obligation to be clever each day ends up in giving the sportswriters the equivalent of a good many punches to the head."

So what next for Big Bro in the press box? Good God, they've already banned typewriters. I suppose next on the hit list will be wine and whisky — "sorry, bad breath old boy". Then swearing, followed by farting. And in no time, after laughter is deemed unacceptable and antisocial, a furtive, lonely smile will have you in handcuffs in the dock.

For a quiet drag at Lord's this summer I will have to pop down to the dreaded Long Room to light up my briar for a few contented draws of that distinctive "blend of Mild Virginia & Other Fine Leaf", namely St Bruno Ready-Rubbed. Or is the

England dressing-room itself the last haven from the PC tyrants, where the athletes themselves don't care a fig if you pop in to share a few puffs with Phil Tufnell?

John Arlott introduced me to St Bruno more than 30 years ago. Would they have thrown Arlott out of the press box? Or Fred Trueman and his Gal-lacher's Rich Dark Honeydew? Or Ian Botham, to whom happiness is still a cigar called Hamlet? I'd love to see them try. I admit I wearily wilt in the face of third-degree stares, but the grandest half-dozen sportswriters of my time — Peter Wilson, Jim Manning, Geoffrey Green, Pat Ward-Thomas, Ian Wooldridge, Hugh McIlvanney, smokers all — would have laughed in the ThoughtCops' faces if they'd been told to desist from putting Swan Vistas to Virginia.

BEFORE the first Test match I ever saw, at Old Trafford in 1948, the captains of England and New Zealand, Freddie Brown and Walter Hadlee, went out to toss enveloped in serene billows of smoke from their two great, curly Petersen pipes. That was also the one and only Brian Close's first Test; he was only 18 and when he signed my autograph book behind the Pav on the Saturday night he asked me first to hold the smoking butt of his Woodbine.

So hacks cannot smoke at the cricket by official and oppressive edict — even though it has never bothered the heroes they write about. Crazy. The all-time greatest quartet of English cricketers — whose lifetime must be Jack Hobbs, Walter Hammond, Leonard Hutton and Denis Compton. Each enjoyed unceasing daily dalliance with the delights of M'Lady Nicotine. Hobbs was extremely fond of fat, expensive things handmade for him in the Burlington Arcade. Wally chainsmoked contentedly fore and aft all his opulent innings. Same with Denis.

Indeed I thought fondly of Compo only yesterday: April 29 was the 48th anniversary of his FA Cup final with Arsenal, and in his chuckling dotage the old boy loved to recall how at half-time against Liverpool he downed half a tumbler of brandy and smoked two Senior Service — as heavy preface to playing a second-half, and winning, blinder.

Sir Len loved a cig so much that he never shared, as was the custom in company. Brian Statham once recalled: "Leonard was the only man I knew who could bring them out of his pocket already lit. Most peculiar. He might offer you a drink, but never a cigarette." Compton and Hutton both took up journalism. Not in 1956 they wouldn't have.

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